

# The Gospel News

January, 2003

Volume 59, No. 1

## “Ho paura id dio” – “I have fear of God.”

*By Evangelist Joel Gehly*

“Ho paura id dio” – “I have fear of God.” These are the words of our Brother Giovanni Marino from Frankfurt, Germany. With this sentiment expressed early in our visit, I knew that God was blessing this family and would honor our prayers for the weekend. The Marino family (originally from southern Italy) has been under great attack recently by the evil in this world. This was one of the main reasons Brother John DiBattista and I traveled to Frankfurt in early September to visit and try to uplift this family. We fasted and prayed before the trip that the Lord would go before us and show His magnificent love. We did not have to worry as God’s presence was felt and demonstrated throughout our visit.

Brother Giovanni and Sister Filomena are two humble and faithful members of the Church. They have two married daughters and four beautiful grandchildren. Currently, their oldest daughter (Lena) has become entangled in the world and has left her family. Needless to say, this has caused great heartache and stress with the entire family. When we entered our brother and sister’s

home on Saturday morning, Brother Giovanni began to tell us of these problems and during that discussion, he said those words, “Ho paura id dio.” At that moment, we felt the Spirit of God come down upon us while we sat on his little balcony.

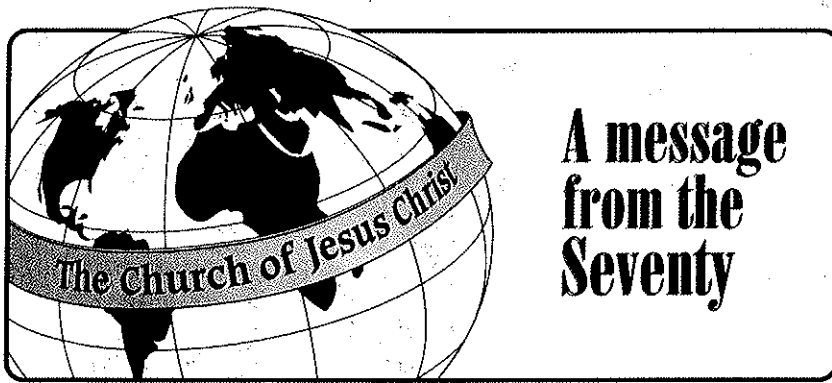
The Marino family has lived in Frankfurt, Germany for many years, but they are originally from the San Demetrio area of Italy. Brother Giovanni is an elder in the Church and he is a staunch believer in the Restored Gospel. Our brother and sister travel back to San Demetrio every year when they have time off from work and they are a great inspiration and help to the saints there. Brother Giovanni will be retiring from his work in a couple of years and they intend to return to live in San Demetrio. Brother Giovanni told us in our discussions during the weekend, “My burden is here [Frankfurt], but my heart is in The Church of Jesus Christ [San Demetrio].”

During our visit, the Lord blessed the Marino family with His love and presence. Let me relate to you a few of the blessings the Lord gave to our brother and sister. On Saturday night, the Lord gave Brother Giovanni a

very beautiful dream and he awoke encouraged and greatly blessed (the details of the dream were not given to his memory). Sunday morning, Brother Giovanni came to the hotel to pick us up for our fellowship. While he was gone, Sister Filomena was getting the apartment ready for our service. As she was alone, she heard the voice of God speak to her. He said, “Continue to do what you are doing [in serving me].” At first she was afraid, but then the voice spoke the message the second time and our sister said that the voice was a beautiful sweet voice that gave her comfort.

We enjoyed a wonderful meeting on Sunday in their apartment. The word of God was spoken and testimonies were shared. Brother Giovanni stated that since the problems happened with his children, he was having a very difficult time feeling the spirit of God and he was unable to cry. During our visit and our Sunday service, he was able to feel God’s spirit and he freely wept tears of joy and relief. At the end of our service, the Lord inspired us to read a verse of scripture found in Job, the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter. As we read that scripture, Brother Giovanni grabbed my arm and began to weep as he flipped through the pages of his Bible. There in the book of Job was a

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## August 2002 Trip to Peru

*By Brother Dick Christman*

The trip to Arequipa, Peru, was the first mission trip for Brother Justin Sieverson. The operation of the mission, including building rent and other vital mission needs, are given priority in the mission budget, which precludes most travel costs. Brother Justin, as well as other mission travelers, willingly purchased their own tickets and were prepared to finance their other expenses in order to help further the Gospel. Brother Justin studied Spanish and had made preparation for the trip. The preparation was evident in the seminars and classes he conducted in the Spanish language. Both the adults and children enthusiastically supported the seminars, which were taught by Brother Miguel Bicelis, Sister Pat Christman, Brother Dick Christman and Bro. Justin.

Sister Sissi Montesinos asked for her baptism. Her husband was baptized on our prior visit. Brother Jose Cardenas, a 16-year-old brother, thanked God that He prompted some anonymous donor to fund his surgery, which enabled him to lift both arms above his head in praise. He was unable to lift his arms for 14 years as a result of scar tissue from a severe burn as an infant. Others were thankful for the clothing the saints had donated.

One young couple was struggling to care for their three children. They have very little income due to the reduced tourist trade and the poor economy. However, they felt constrained to adopt two more small

children that were not being adequately cared for. The clothing, and some help from the Phoenix /Mesa Sunday School, gave them renewed determination to care for the children in spite of their hardships. Brother Gerald testified he knew it was God's will because he had a dream in which he had a large house and had many children to care for. He and Sister Nancy do not have a house at this time but are living with their parents.

The Lord is directing us to revisit a mountainous area that has very little in everyday conveniences but the people are receptive to the Gospel. Pray that God will make a way. Your prayers and support make it possible.

## Special Service at San Carlos, Arizona Reservation

A very special meeting was held in the Southwest Region Conference on Sunday, March 10, 2002, at the San Carlos Mission on the Apache Reservation. The service was special as it included a transition of missionaries in charge from Evangelist Dan Picciuto to his son, Brother David Picciuto.

Evangelist John Griffith, President of the Quorum of 70 Evangelists, opened the meeting with words of encouragement to all and gave recognition of the missionary efforts in San Carlos. Brother David Picciuto then gave a brief history of the Mission.

Brother Dan and Sister Dolores first came to Arizona as a very young family in August of 1960. The Church was built in August 1961 and they moved to the reservation later that year. Brother Dan and Sister Dolores remained on the San Carlos Reservation until October 1971. They returned in October 1989. Joining them were David and Laurie and their family, as well as their daughter Tina and her family, and Grandma Nellie Hoffman. A new Sanctuary was built in 1996 and they have held many successful Vacation Bible Schools with more than 100 children from the Reservation in attendance. Brother Dan and Sister Dolores have committed their lives to service on the San Carlos Reservation for a total of 23 years.

A commemorative plaque was presented to Brother Dan and Sister Dolores for their many years of faithful service at the mission. Prayer was offered on behalf of both Brother David and Sister Laurie and their family, and Brother Dan and Sister Dolores. Although Brother Dan and Sister Dolores will move to Gold Canyon, which is about 75 miles from San Carlos, they will continue to support the mission and encourage the Church to remember our Divine Commission toward God's chosen people.

## What is a Missionary?

*By Sister Donna Eskut*

So often, we hear the term "missionary" used throughout the Church, but what is a missionary? The dictionary defines a missionary as one sent to do religious or charitable work in a territory or foreign country. We have all read reports about missionaries working in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, and on Indian reservations in the US. Matthew 28:18 says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost." These are the reports and guidelines, but there is

so much more to a missionary.

I have had the rare opportunity to live overseas. My family and I have spent two years in South Korea, and we are now living in Lima, Peru. During this time, I have been able to witness missionaries in the field. What they actually do is far more than words could ever describe. Two brothers visited with a young sister from Japan in my South Korean home. We had meetings together, but the real missionary work came from the blessings they brought. For my young children, some of this came through bubble gum tape (a rare item in Korea!), a frozen turkey, and a packet of Sunday School lessons that they brought with them. For me, the blessings came when I saw the pure love they brought into my home. They brought guidance; it was the type that only came through thoughtful fasting and prayer. They brought songs, though neither are known for their wonderful voices. These brothers were ready and willing to do what needed done for the young Japanese sister and me. God was using them.

This past year, I was able to see missionaries in action once again on a different continent. I visited the mission in Arequipa, Peru. Once again, I felt the incredible and pure love of God that is more than words can describe. When the children smile, your heart melts. When the people give their thanks, your own humility shines because you know that none of these blessings are possible to witness without the Lord. The missionaries who come here regularly do not know much Spanish, and yet God is using them in this South American country to spread the news that Jesus is the Savior and there is a better way in life – through The Church of Jesus Christ. They often bring an interpreter with them, but even without language the work is accomplished because the love is so intense.

Living in both Asia and South America, I have learned a lot about the cultures. Often, the missionaries that are out in the field do not have this opportunity. They are in a foreign land without the benefit of the native language, cultural expectations, or

simple knowledge of how to get around. However, they have something far more powerful – the pure and complete love of God. I cannot explain in words the intensity of this love when you are out in the missionary field. It goes beyond the name of the brothers or sisters that are working there; these missionaries are simply vehicles used by God to do His work.

True missionaries are the saints who give of themselves in God's name. It is not their work; it is God's work. Missionaries bring the song *Stand Up for the Restoration* alive. They don't expect anything from the people they work with. They are doing work to tell people about The Church of Jesus Christ.

In foreign lands, the intensity of missionary work is strong, but if you really look into your heart, we each have that same spirit from God. Each of us can set an example and spread God's word. And each of us can be a true missionary. It's all a matter of opening your heart.

## Great Lakes Region Evangelists visit Plumbrook, Michigan

On Saturday Evening September 14, 2002 Brothers Lou Vitto, Chairman of the Region Evangelists, Leonard A. Loyalvo and Michael LaSalla visited the Plumbrook, Michigan Branch for the first of two spiritual meetings. Brother Paul Whitton, Presiding Elder welcomed the Evangelists and visitors to this service. Brother Lou Vitto offered a very inspiring prayer asking that God would bless the branch and strengthen it spiritually. We sang a number of songs and opened with the hymn *There is Not Anything That Jesus Cannot Do*.

To bring our attention to the opening hymn that *There Is Not Anything Jesus Cannot Do*, Brother Leonard reminded us of his terrible auto accident. The first man to

approach the car told Brother Leonard that he must be a spiritual man to have survived this horrible accident. As he came to, the thoughts that went through his mind were how he had not done enough for the Lord. He cried to Jesus to have mercy and help him to recover from the critical injuries received. Today Brother Leonard is very grateful to God for saving his life. He continues to believe that he cannot do enough to repay the Lord for His goodness.

He continued reading from Acts 8:26 & 30 where Phillip, a great man of God, ran to the Eunuch as he sat in a chariot and asked if he understood what he was reading? The Eunuch said, "How can I if there is no one to guide me?" Phillip then discussed the scriptures with the Eunuch. Brother Leonard said it illustrates that we can read the scripture and not understand without God's guidance. He then went to Isaiah 53:1-12 where the prophet describes the sufferings of Christ, stressing that Jesus Christ gave His life for us and promised us salvation. As Brother Leonard closed, he emphasized that *There is Not Anything That Jesus Cannot Do*.

We reviewed the dates of baptism of each one present and sang *Precious Memories*. Brother Mike LaSalla continued saying, "Blessed be the Name, how Christ prepared the way for you and me. We are rich in His name. How blessed it is to be a child of the King. Praise God today for by His mercy we are saved."

Our Brothers reminded us of conditions in the world today and how much more we need the Lord. God has given us the best and when we pray the spirit of the Lord touches us and answers us. The best miracle is a spiritual miracle. Try not to complain in life, as what Christ went through is much worse than any of us have or will encounter. Let us praise God and stay close and you will see the many miracles the Lord can perform. We must stay together and serve the Lord together in unity. Pray unceasingly and watch what

Missionary  
Benevolent  
Association

## What Is the *Desire* of Your Heart?

By Sister Karen Progar

We know the GMBA, as an auxiliary of The Church of Jesus Christ, is dedicated to supporting the Church's missionary work. A number of years ago, most of that support was given as financial aid. Financial assistance was part of the package at our November 9th Conference held at the World Conference Center in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. \$5,000.00 was presented to the Missionary Operating Committee and the organization pushed towards its goal of \$50,000.00 to assist in the printing of Books of Mormon in foreign languages.

A crucial growth aspect of the GMBA lies in the physical support provided by programs such as Youth in Action, which has four planned trips for 2003. Young people will be assisting with the works in the Inner City of Detroit; Lorain, Ohio; Hollywood, Florida and Dominica. In addition, two young people are being chosen for an extended tour in Fort Worth, Texas that will last the entire summer. It is very exciting to see the programs of the GMBA take such bold and progressive steps.

We were pleased to hear about the missionary efforts of the Church. At the beginning of our afternoon session, Brother Art and Sister Martha Gehly were afforded the opportunity to tell the conference about their recent trip to the Philippines. We enjoyed hearing about the continued growth in that area of the world and how the Lord had blessed their trip with many baptisms and ordinations. The young people were also encouraged to take on pen pals from the Philippines.

I came away from the conference with an unforgettable theme in

my mind. The theme presented by Brother David Catalano, in our Saturday evening meeting was *desire*. He chose to rehearse the story of Elijah, the mentor and great man of God, and Elisha, who sought a double portion of the Spirit of God, which Elijah possessed. Elisha refused to stay behind as Elijah went about doing the things the Lord had for him to do. Brother David asked us, "Do we tell Jesus, no matter where He goes, we will follow?" That is exactly what we must do in order to receive the spirit we *desire*. He reminded us as it states in Helaman 3:34, "Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God." These were good words of counsel for all of us, reminding us of the need to pray for the direction in our lives and particularly in regard to a work we can do within the Church.

This yielding is seeking the *desire* of your heart, while being in the will of God. Brother Chuck Maddox brought home this point when he said that if we do what God tells us, the results would be there. Each of us felt renewed with the thought that the Lord wants to grant the *desires* of our hearts, particularly if those *desires* include spreading the Gospel to the children of men.

Sunday's meeting was opened by Evangelist Paul Ciotti, who had just returned from Guatemala. Brother Paul felt directed to speak on God's plan in our life. He used God's plan in Esther and Mordecai's lives as an example, warning us that if we don't yield to what the Lord has for us to do, then He will find someone else to do it. Brother Paul asked, "How will you know what His plan is for you if you don't seek him out?" It all goes back to *desire*. He also asked if we are preparing ourselves to be vessels for God? He concluded by telling us that plans are laid out in the word of God and reminded us that we must accept

that we are in God's plan and move forward. Brother Paul confirmed that Esther accepted God's plan for her life. She said in Esther 4:16, "...and if I perish, I perish." She was not concerned for her own life, but determined, having a *desire* to follow God's plan. Because of her lack of fear and determination, all the Jews were spared.

Fittingly, the congregation sang, *Speak My Lord*, after which Brother Ken Staley shared many wonderful experiences had in the missionary work of the Church. Our concluding speaker was Apostle Paul Palmieri who stated that he feels that God is moving His hand and that the Church will move throughout the world. We all have a responsibility to do this work and his prayer is that together we will be active in the work of the Lord.

GMBA President, Brother Paul Palmieri ended our conference by emphasizing that our focus is to bring sinners to Christ and he challenged everyone to find that perfect will of God. Begin praying that God will bless your good *desire* to do a work for him. Be persistent like Elisha and God will surely grant it.

Make it your *desire* to attend our next conference on May 17, 2003 at the Towne and Country Hotel in San Diego, California. This is the first time that a GMBA Conference will be held in the Pacific Coast and we look forward to a good representation of membership from throughout the country.

Happiness  
depends on  
happenings.

Joy depends on  
Jesus!



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## Editorial Viewpoint . . .

*"And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles. And it shall come to pass that I will establish my people, O house of Israel. And behold, this people will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you" (3<sup>rd</sup> Nephi 20:20-22).*

These are some of the words of Jesus when he appeared to the people upon this land shortly after His crucifixion. He was prophesying about the last days (our day). He was telling them that someday, the Gentiles would occupy this land of America, but if they did not keep His commandments, they would be destroyed. The sword of justice represents God's wrath upon evil. It is true that God is a God of mercy, but the Word teaches us that mercy cannot rob justice. A person, who does not admit their faults and repent of their sins, will not find mercy and forgiveness from God. Jesus goes on to say that He will establish the House of Israel upon this land after those who are wicked are destroyed. Jacob, the father of all the House of Israel was promised by God that his seed would never be destroyed, and that although they would be scattered and driven throughout time, in the last days, they would be gathered together again, as a righteous people. A "New Jerusalem" will be established upon the land of America. Jerusalem was always the city of God, but in the last days, this land of America will become the "New Jerusalem" where men and women everywhere will see the "powers of heaven," and even Jesus Himself, will be in the midst of us! Certainly, those of the House of Israel who repent will be there, as well as any Gentiles who repent. We already know that the Jews and the Native Americans are two of the tribes of the House of Israel, but the other ten tribes will be known to us at that day.

What amazing insight we have about the future! There are so many beliefs and opinions in the world regarding the future, but we have been allowed to know the truth! People today say, "things are getting so bad, we don't even want to bring children into the world!" Others are consumed with fears and phobias. Fortunately, we know that "mercy cannot rob justice," and things will NOT continue on as they are. It is the perfect time to bring children into the world, as they will witness one of the most incredible events in history! Imagine living in the New Jerusalem, and witnessing the powers of heaven! Imagine actually seeing Jesus, who will be in our midst! Imagine no wickedness or sin upon this land! Imagine there just being one Church – The Church of Jesus Christ! The Bible teaches us that we will work for ourselves, gathering food, building our homes, and enjoying the fruit of our labors for a "LONG" time! The Bible also tells us that this land will become the mountain of the Lord's house, and all nations will flow to it. Imagine people coming by the thousands to be a part of this incredible city! Just imagine living in the PEACEFUL REIGN!

As we enter into the year 2003, some might feel like we are living on "borrowed time." How much longer will it take for this Peaceful Reign, or "Zion" to be established? *"The better part of a lifetime, in defense of a dream..."* Surely that day WILL come. Remember that whenever God makes us wait for something to happen, or for a prayer to be answered, He is testing our faith. We must not fail the test! It is time for us to look ahead with renewed vigor and confidence to that day that awaits us. Let us not become like the people at the time of Noah who doubted and mocked the prophecy, and then were all drowned in an awful flood. Let us stand for the truth like never before. Let us be the ones who do NOT bear the wrath of God when His sword of justice is unleashed, but let us be the ones who are victorious when this new day dawns for the people of God!

# The Children's Corner



By Sister Janet Bork

## The Power of Praise in Song

Dear Girls and Boys,

Many times grown-ups forget about the hard times they had as children. They forget about feeling rejected or left out by other kids or being afraid of a teacher or someone in the neighborhood. People think childhood is easy when really, it is a time of life with heavy things to learn. And the way we learn how to handle things when we are young can last a lifetime.

So, how do you handle your worries and often, the worries of friends or family? What can you do to be strong enough inside to help yourself and others? It's simple, really. It's by using your mind and heart to reach out to Jesus.

When you're walking to school or laying in bed late at night, you can have a heart to heart talk with Jesus. He's listening. Instead of just thinking worried thoughts, tell Him. Then sing a song to take away your fears.

In Acts 16:22-31, the Apostle Paul and Silas were grabbed by an angry mob of people. They were beaten and thrown into prison with their feet locked between two boards.

No one knew what the next day would bring. Would they be whipped again while strangers screamed and shoved them.

Hours passed. At midnight, Paul and Silas began to sing praises unto

God. The other prisoners heard them. And suddenly, there was a great earthquake. The entire foundation of the prison was shaken. All the doors were opened and the boards trapping the prisoners' feet were made loose.

God had heard these men who sat, hurt in the dark, and sang beautiful songs of praise. He opened the doors for them. The prison could not hold them. He can do the same for us.

When our hearts are imprisoned, upset, afraid or ashamed, God can free us. Follow Paul and Silas' example. Pray, speak the truth and trust in God. Keep trusting in Him even it's still dark. Raise a joyful song to Him. It works!

Do this over the next terrible or not so terrible problem you hear about. Every time you feel scared or full of worry and dread, pray. Call on God. Tell Him. Don't gossip about your friend—say a prayer in Jesus' name. Then sing a song that gives you hope.

Do you have favorite songs from our hymn books or the *Songs of Zion*? When I'm driving the car in a dreadful thunderstorm, I sing *No, Never Alone* or *My God! Thou See'st Me*. When I feel heartsick about others, I sing *I Saw the Wicked Flourish Like a Green Bay Tree*, or *Good Morning God*.

Turn off your stereo, your CD's and the radio. Turn on the real power—a song of trust and praise to God. It will make you braver, stronger and better. Let a hymn of praise work for you over and over and over.

With care, and may *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*.

Love,  
Sister Jan

### WORD SEARCH

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**Happy New  
Year**  
 To All Our Readers



## Branch and Mission News

### Forest Hills, Holiday, Florida News

By Sister Lorraine Rose

#### THE WONDERS OF HIS LOVE...

...And Jesus said, "Come to the waters, stand by my side; I know you are thirsty, you won't be denied. I felt every tear-drop, when in darkness you cried, and I strove to remind you, that **FOR THOSE TEARS I DIED.**" The Lord calls and we answer and there are times we struggle to answer right away, but the Lord never gives up on us.

We, at the Forest Hills Branch, have received such an abundance of His love, spirit and blessings this day that I wanted to share it with all the saints.

The spirit of God started burning several months ago. Sunshine met the Church through Brother Dan Risola, her fiancé. She enjoyed the fellowship very much, but had been struggling for a while with her desire to be part of this Gospel. Many blessings were received through the love of God and she was always mindful of her desire. Brother Dan also felt the spirit had touched her and that she was struggling.

Sunday evening, July 28, 2002, we had a Solid Foundation (formerly New Members) class. The discussion was from the Book of Mormon, Nephi's dream. Sister Pearl had asked why some of Lehi's children (Laman and Lemuel) did not follow God like Nephi and Sam. The message was brought out that it is an individual choice. We discussed reasons why we would serve the Lord and why we wouldn't. A circle was formed and Brother Scott Griffith felt to close in prayer. Afterwards, Sunshine was very touched and we could see she was struggling. Brother Sam Risola laid hands on her asking God to "break

those chains that were binding her." The gift of tongues was spoken with the interpretation, "My love was proven to you through the cross." Immediately after that Sunshine shouted, "I WANT TO BE BAPTIZED!" Praise God!

Sunday morning, August 4, 2002, we met at the water's edge to witness another soul surrendering to the Lord. Sister Sunshine was baptized by Brother Scott Griffith. What a blessing this was, but the Lord had much more for us this day.

After a request of hymns sung by Brother Phil and Sister Linda Benyola,



**Sister Sunshine after being  
baptized by Brother Scott Griffith.**

Brother Jim Speck read John 14:25-26 pertaining to the Holy Ghost. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The elders then gathered around Sister Sunshine and she was confirmed by Brother John Griffith. After Brother Dan gave his testimony, he, Brother Scott, Brother Bryan and Brother John Griffith then sang, *There is a River*. Sister Sunshine then gave her testimony to the congregation. While Sister Sunshine was testifying, a few experiences took place:

Sister Pearl Zinzi saw Sister Sunshine, her hair and clothing arrayed

all in white.

Sister Linda Benyola saw a brilliant figure of a man, kneeling at the sacrament table, with his head bowed down. She also saw two figures, brilliant in white, walking back and forth on the ministry.

The words, "I call and I receive" came to Brother John Griffith. What a confirmation of His great Love for us and His happiness when we obey.

After Sister Debbie Gonzalez sang *If That Isn't Love*, Brother Phil Benyola read John 14:28 concerning the "Peace" the Lord gives us.

God is truly a living God, giving so much to those that love and serve Him. I hope you felt a little bit of this spirit that we experienced. May God bless you.

### Atlanta, Georgia

By Brother Mark Kovacic

#### *Chance Meeting?*

A few Saturdays ago, my brother-in-law, Brother Jerry Lee Warden, and I were in the Marietta Public Library (Marietta is northwest of Atlanta). I was picking out some new books on tape to be listened to in the car during my commutes to work. I overheard a man on the other side of the shelves. I could not see his face, but his voice and what he was saying told me he was an American Indian.

I thought what an opportunity! Then, I hesitated. I started rationalizing, "It's a public place, I should be careful," etc. But as I started for the stairs, I stopped and prayed in my heart, asking the Lord for assistance.

The man at that point also started up the steps and I asked him what nation he was from. He responded that he was a Lakota Sioux. I asked him what brought him so far from home. He said he was there to start an American Indian Association. Although he was leaving, I struck up a conversation with him and gave him one of my church cards and told him to call me if he needed any help.

(Continued on Page 8)

## Atlanta, Georgia

Continued from Page 7

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

Chance meeting? I don't think so. So, please pray with me that this American Indian will call and that The Church of Jesus Christ may have an opportunity to work with the American Indians in the Atlanta area.

## Fort Worth, Texas

By Brother David Casillas

In September, 2002, in the Ft. Worth Texas branch, Brother Joel Monsivias was chosen by God to be ordained a minister by Brother Ike Smith. The service began like most others with a comforting introduction from the minister. There was also an invigorating excitement produced by intense anticipation and curiosity as to what God had in store for the congregation that special Sunday morning. The ordination service proved to be an emotional blessing from start to finish.

Visitors for the occasion included Brother Tom Liberto, Sister Bonnie Smith, and several others, including some from Laredo, Texas. Quoting Brother Ike Smith "Brother Joel has been called by God and God doesn't make mistakes." Brother Joel's feet were washed by Brother Pete Giannetti. Then, filled with tears of indescribable joy that only God can bring you, Brother Joel gave a beautiful testimony which was a blessing to hear. One can only imagine what glorious things God has in store for Brother Joel's future, and for all of our futures in The Church of Jesus Christ. Praise God!

## A Day Filled with Blessings at Vanderbilt, PA

By Sister Peggy Stroko

The day, September 29, 2002 was started at 9:00 am. as we gathered at the shore of the Youghenegey River at Dawson, Pennsylvania. Another of God's children surrendered their all to Him. The winds were calm as Brother Lawrence King took Margaret Ilene Frankenbery into the waters of baptism.

We met back at the branch, *To the Work* was sung as Margaret made her way forward to sit in front of the congregation. Brother Richard Lowther was touched by the Spirit as he laid hands upon her head. He prayed asking God to bestow upon her the gifts of The Church of Jesus Christ and that the fruits of the Spirit would manifest throughout her life. He then pronounced the gift of the Holy Ghost upon her.

Sister Margaret and daughter-in-law Sister Connie Frankenbery sang a duet, *How Great Thou Art*, after we all greeted our new sister in Christ.

Brother Chester Nolfi spoke saying, "The angels are rejoicing today that another soul has come to the Lord." He made reference to St. John 14:26, "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" Brother Chester continued by saying, "We need that Spirit of the Holy Ghost."

Brother Richard Lowther followed, saying, "Use that gift of the Holy Ghost wisely and let it work for you."

Brother Lawrence King then spoke relating the experience he had at the water's edge this morning. "It was a tremendous experience for me this morning because as I put Maggie down into the water and I looked down and her body seemed to be so level. I couldn't believe it honestly, truly! She was buried with Christ. I have never experienced that before. I looked down and it looked as though her body

was just level there in the water and when she came up she was a new creature in Christ Jesus!" He continued by saying, "We can't expect Christ to conform to us, we must conform to Christ."

Our service was continued by the ordinance of Feet Washing where the blessings continued to be prevalent.

The meeting was ended in prayer as we formed a circle of love holding hands.

There has been much sorrow in our branch because of the recent passing of Aaron Darr, Sister Goldie Hixon, and Sister Susanna King. Today we are told of two members of the Church transferring to our branch—Brother James and Sister Mechelle Haugh, with their daughters Nia and Taryn. Now we have another new sister in Christ, Margaret I. Frankenbery.

May God bless our new sister and our new members!

God is healing our Branch! He continues to bless us all!

## Blessing in New Brunswick, NJ

On Sunday, October 5th, 2002, we were blessed with the Spirit of God in our presence. We were few in number that day in the New Brunswick, New Jersey branch but none the less, we know the Lord has said that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He would be in their midst.

In Sunday School, Brother James Howard continued with the previous week's lesson on 2nd Nephi, Chapter 9, expounding on why Christ died and if He had not died, what hope would there have been for us? He also discussed having wisdom, understanding and discernment. We were also blessed to have our Sister Terry Bravo from the Edison, New Jersey Branch visiting us. She was a provided "ram in the bush" setting the sacrament table.

Brother Sam Sgro opened the morning meeting in prayer and the Spirit of God was surely in his offer-



ing. Following was Brother James Howard, who spoke on Proverbs, Chapter 4, versus 5 thru 8. He spoke on wisdom being the principal thing and the importance of possessing wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment. He also spoke on obedience and how obedience was better than sacrifice. He implored us to stay with the Church and "forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee."

Brother Sam Sgro, who read from Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, verses 9 thru 11 and 13 thru 14, concerning knowledge and the whole duty of man, followed him. Next, Brother Wilbert McNeil spoke on our promise we made at the water's edge, love and obedience. Brother Ricky Calabro followed speaking in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 2, verse 12, concerning the discerning spirit of God. He also spoke about the foolishness of God being wiser than men. We were blest to hear from all the Elders that Sunday.

During testimony, Sister Terry Bravo related how she had attended Sunday School in Edison that morning and how the young children's lesson was on Solomon's wisdom. What a wonderful blessing how the Lord confirmed the message that was brought forth to us from the youngest to the oldest!

Sister Maria Canseco Espinoza, one of our newly baptized sisters, testified of a vision she had upon coming to Church. She saw a white dove flying in front of the church and during the preaching she saw a bright light over the priesthood and did not understand what it meant.

Brother Ricky explained the dove as being representative of God's spirit and the bright light also being the Spirit of God, as we can truly testify He was in our presence.

We enjoyed a beautiful meeting as we felt God's spirit, goodness, grace and love in the teaching, preaching, singing, testimonies and partaking of communion. God is so good to us. It was asked of Him to come into our midst and He did not disappoint us. As our Brother Wilbert often says (using his mother's words), "Who wouldn't serve a God like this!" Amen!

## 92-Year-Old Baptized

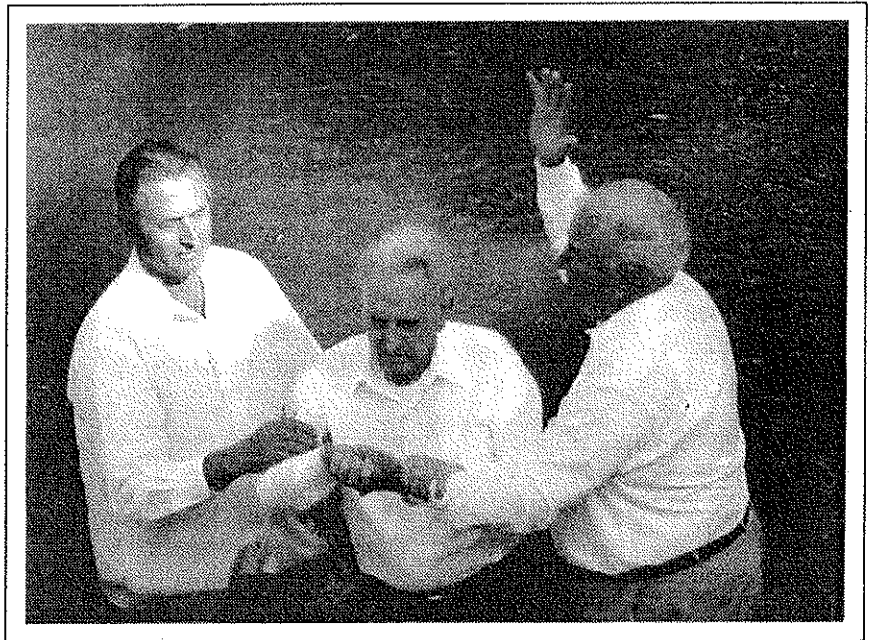
October 13, 2002 began with the saints gathering at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, it was decided not to break the congregation into separate classes. Instead, we would remain in one group, unified, singing praises to our God in anticipation of another soul coming to Christ. Elmer Bittinger, at the age of 92 was going to the waters of rejuvenation. Several of his family members including his brother, Apostle Joseph Bittinger, gathered to support him. The songs of redemption filled the air. Our jubilation was great!

Soon the caravan began like a

great train heading to the waters. Evangelist Jim Moore and Brother Bob Buffington escorted Elmer into the water. As Brother Bob lifted his hands to the heavens, a glorious beam of light broke through the clouds, spotlighting the three men, acknowledging heaven's delight.

The same spirit prevailed as Brother Tom Stroko, his grandnephew, laid hands upon our new brother in prayer to receive the Holy Ghost.

While the congregation prepared to greet our newest member, Apostle Joseph Bittinger took his brother's hands. He hugged him and told him "you've always been a good man, a hard worker, now you will have joy!" What a blessed event to witness!



Brother Bob Buffington, assisted by Brother Jim Moore, baptizing Brother Elmer Bittinger.

## Tampa, Florida

By Brother Peter Benyola

Perhaps Brother Dee Eutsey missed Sunday school for a reason this morning.

For the past several months, in Sunday school, as a group, we have been reading Brother V. James Lovalvo's book, *A Dissertation on the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of*

*Jesus Christ*. Today, we studied Article 23, concerning the Peaceful Reign and how man will be in the mortal form when He takes His children to Zion. We discussed many topics including the humbling of the nation and how September 11 and its long-lasting repercussions may have played a part in ushering in the Peaceful Reign. We also discussed other

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