



# The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA

January, 2006

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## The Restored Gospel Message Established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Evangelist J. Joseph Perri, African Sector Chairman

*"For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true. I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. I do not glory in myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me; and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God."*

These words recorded in The Book of Mormon came to me very forcefully upon my return home from our Congo/Malawi trip in February, 2005. I acknowledge this scripture was meant for me to understand God's purpose for my ministry and I bless His name for it.

God was preparing a man from another African country (the Congo) to be an instrument in His hand to accept the Restored Gospel message and to be a preacher of righteousness. This individual by the name of Cipeng A' Kapend, began to correspond with Evangelist Joel Gehly.

He introduced himself as being a former member of the RLDS Church and ordained into their Quorum of 70. Having been a part of the Restoration movement, he wanted to remain with this teaching. He was married, a father of 10 children, a French linguist and an attorney. As his interest grew with each correspondence and reading the Faith and Doctrine, receiving favorable answers to his questions, he was satisfied this was the church he wanted to be a member of. He was requested to visit with our Brothers in Nairobi, Kenya and was baptized by Brother Stephen Osaka. Returning home to the city of Lubumbashi Congo he began to hold church services in his living room, calling the Church "Eglise De Jesus Christ." Brother Cipeng was invited to join and visit with us on our maiden trip to Malawi in September 2004. As he sat and listened to the preaching of the Restored Gospel message, our Faith & Doctrine, feeling the spirit of God very strongly he was convinced more than at any other time, this is the church he wanted his people to embrace. Upon his return home, this wonderful man

of God presented to the people he was meeting with the Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ telling them we had the truth. It did not take long for the people he was holding worship services with in three different locations to become interested in the faith of our Church. Brother Cipeng, being their leader, accepted the Church and Her faith, it was good for him as their Spiritual leader, it would be good for them as well. His people wanted to hear of the Restored Gospel also, thus Brother Cipeng sent a message back to America, extending an invitation to our Priesthood to come to his country and preach the Restored Gospel message and to establish The Church of Jesus Christ in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The latter part of January, 2005, Brothers Gehly, Joseph Perri, Lyle Criscuolo and Mike Nuzzi from The Church of Jesus Christ made the exploratory trip to the DRC. Upon our arrival we met with Brother Cipeng and a small group of people in the dining room of our hotel for our stay. My brothers and I immediately began to see the power and the glory of God beginning to pave the way for the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ in this country. A number of experiences were related. Several testified they saw the faces of the

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## Restored Gospel in Congo

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visiting missionaries and the date of our arrival. A brother said he saw the Spirit of God in the form of a dove encircling us as we spoke to the group assembled. In meeting with the people in the living room at the home of Brother Cipeng, we began to experience a unanimous feeling of the Spirit of God, making us understand Brother Cipeng was being called into the Priesthood of the Church. The night before Brother Cipeng was ordained into the Priesthood, Brother Criscuolo was given an experience in which he was shown which brother would pray setting aside Brother Cipeng for ordination by washing his feet, who would pray and ask God to select the brother to ordain Brother Cipeng prior to the ordination, and the brother who would ordain Brother Cipeng into the Priesthood. Brother Lyle related the experience after the ordination confirming his experience. As in his experience, Brother Lyle offered prayer that God would select the brother to wash his feet and ordain him. Brother Gehly washed Brother Cipeng's feet, and he was ordained by Brother Perri. Brother Nuzzi related that while Brother Joel was washing the feet of Brother Cipeng, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ standing behind him with His hand on his shoulder.

### CONFIRMATION OF THE OF BROTHER CIPENG INTO THE PRIESTHOOD

(Experience related by Brother Florimond Mukadi from the Congo.) During the ceremony, at the moment of the washing of feet and the laying on of hands by the American Missionaries, the Lord God graciously allowed me to see the following vision: There were Angels, all in robes of white surrounding the missionaries that had formed a circle around Brother Cipeng. There were vertical columns of flowers to the right side and to the left side. Also in the center of these flowers there were Palm Branches. A voice made itself

heard; "You have entered into my glory. Know that I am beside you, but do not abandon me because if you would, you will have tribulations and temptations. Avoid evil, do what is good. Peace, my Lamb." A wonderful experience to confirm God's will.

On the 29th day of January we baptized the first 39 converts. What a glorious sight to behold as one by one these folks whom we had just met for the first time and preached the Restored Gospel message felt the spirit of repentance and requested to be baptized. During one of the baptismal services, a rainstorm arose. The dark clouds and the heavy rain were coming towards us, but we were not moved from performing this holy ordinance. Brother Joel prayed silently asking God to divert the storm in another direction, so we could complete the baptisms; and as it was requested, it was done. Everyone watching the baptisms also saw the storm turn away from where we were standing by the small body of water.

During our teaching and training sessions, we received inspiration from God to call and ordain several brothers and sisters to assist Brother Cipeng for the day-to-day operation of the Church. As mentioned earlier, the Spirit of God was present to confirm everything we did. While Brother Joel was offering a prayer

for the ordination of a Teacher, I had to open my eyes to see whether it was Brother Joel praying, because instead of hearing his voice, I heard that of Brother Russell Cadman. Never had I experienced anything of this kind before.

A testimony we heard related during one of our meetings touched our hearts. Our prayer is that the *Gospel News* readers who have the opportunity to read this testimony will share in the same blessing of hearing of a young man who said he had no reason to live because nothing seemed to go right for him. On numerous occasions he tried to put an end to his life. He named some of the things he tried but the last try to commit suicide was the most frightening of all to hear. It was when he climbed on top of a moving freight train box car and threw himself to the ground. His life did not end and he wondered why.

One day, not long before our arrival in the Congo, he was invited to come to church, was told, soon missionaries were coming to Lubumbashi from America. He accepted the invitation and for the first time in his life he heard the message of the Restoration, the love that Jesus Christ had for mankind wherein he was willing to offer His life as a sacrifice to redeem the souls of men and women, regardless of their ethnic



background, color of skin, etc. He listened very intently to how Jesus Christ had paved the way for mankind to have a better life, to give us hope, to offer salvation to them who believe and have a repentant heart. This man named Faustin Kabongo was touched by the message, and he began to exercise a particle of faith in the message that was preached. He repented with a broken heart and requested baptism. Brother Faustin testified he had come to understand why he could not put an end to his life, because God had other plans for him.

My brothers and I felt the inspiration of God to call and ordain Brother Faustin to the office of a Teacher. At his ordination, I felt prompted to set him apart for this office by washing his feet. I was so overcome by the Spirit of God in offering prayer that he and I began to weep for the joy we both felt. Upon arising from prayer, we embraced and cried with more tears, expressing the inward feeling in an outward way of God's touch and love we were sharing for each other. Please note Brother Faustin only speaks and understands French; he speaks just a couple of words in English. Love and the spirit of God knows no bounds of language or color of skin. Brother Criscuolo ordained him into the office of a Teacher. By vocation, he is a schoolmaster and is respected by and loved by all who know him.

During our stay in Lubumbashi, our schedule consisted of a full day's activity from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30-5:00 p.m. Subjects covered were the Restoration; Faith and Doctrine; Book of Mormon; ordinances, such as baptism, holy communion; ordained officers; anointing; naming of the Church; blessing of little children; feet washing; monogamy, etc. Every day the sisters prepared lunch for between 70 to 85 people. Many questions were asked on each subject presented, and with the guidance and inspiration of God, all were answered to everyone's satisfaction.

There were many other experiences we heard which are too many to mention in this article. In total, there were 45 baptisms, 35 children

blessed, and one Elder, three Teachers, two Deacons and four Deaconesses ordained.

At a meeting on February 1, The Church of Jesus Christ was officially established in the Congo. Various officers were appointed for the operation of the Church. Brother Cipeng was appointed the Director of the Church in this country. Three branches have been established; namely Katuba, Raushi and Kalebuka.

**THE CITIZENS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY IN AFRICA, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, HAVE EMBRACED THE RESTORED GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

Brother Cipeng baptized 13 more converts since our return home, making a total membership of 59 in the DRC as of August 1.

**OUR AUGUST 2005 MISSIONARY VISIT TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Six months have passed since our first visit to this country in January/February of this year. This mission field was placed under the New Works Program of the International Missionary Operating Committee, with the African Sector officers overseeing the operation of this new mission field. Corresponding with Brother Cipeng during our absence, he would ask and relay the message from the brothers and sisters requesting for us to make a quick return visit. This being a new mission field, we understood the need for a return visit to train the newly-ordained officers, encourage the membership, and to show our love and concern for them. Evangelist Philip Arcuri and I made this trip and arrived in the Congo on August 10. We were looking forward to being with the saints of the Church in this part of the world. Our mission was to ordain another Elder to assist Brother Cipeng. The opposition, who is ever present when the work of God is progressing, knew of our mission, tried in many ways to discourage us, but God would not allow us to be sidetracked. Meeting

with our beloved brothers and sisters assured us of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church and their determination to keep the promise made the day of their baptism.

Brother Cipeng had been caring for the saints and, with the membership increasing, we sought the will of God in ordaining another brother to assist him. Knowing the need for more workers to assist in the Great Work of the Lord, God gave me an experience, confirming it was the will of God to call another brother into the Ministry.

"In a dream on May 24, I was in a room with my father, Brother Eugene Perri, Sr. who was an Evangelist in the Church for 67 years and passed away in May, 1986. There was another brother in the room and we were talking about the needs of the Church. I mentioned we had a need for another Elder in the Congo to assist Brother Cipeng, the only priesthood member we currently have in the country, and told my father I wanted to recommend Brother Amisi Muweza. My father said, "But we do not know of nor anything about him." I then began to describe Brother Amisi's characteristics, the spirit he demonstrated during our visit and the help he would be to the Church. The brother sitting with us just nodded his head and seemed to agree with everything I said. At that moment my dad said, "Go for it: re-commend Brother Amisi for ordination into the Priesthood." The other brother in the room though silent and very observant listening to our conversation, appeared to be Brother Bob McDonnell, who is the Assistant Chairman of the Africa Sector.

Approval was granted by the IMOC and the Quorum of 12 Apostles to ordain Brother Amisi Bin Muweza. Brother Amisi was once a Moslem. He was converted to Christianity by Brother Cipeng a number of years ago while he was a member of his former church. Brother Amisi was a former Priest in the RLDS church. He followed Brother Cipeng as many others have and embraced The Church

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of Jesus Christ during our first visit to the Congo earlier this year. I ordained him a Teacher during our first visit and was inspired to set him apart for the ordination as an Elder by washing his feet. He was ordained by Brother Arcuri as an Elder.

Brother Faustin Kabongo had an experience on June 10, confirming the ordination of Brother Amisi. What was so impressive about Brother Faustin's dream was no one beside Brother Cipeng knew Brother Amisi was recommended to be ordained an Elder. Brother Amisi was not even



informed until the day of our arrival he was going to be ordained. A very large crowd gathered at the Ruashi branch and experienced his ordination on August 13.

During our visit we spent many hours training the Priesthood, Teachers and Deacons in the Faith and Doctrine, Restoration, ordinances, their duties, and the order of meetings. As during our first visit, the brothers and sisters want to learn more about our Church beliefs. Many questions were asked particularly on the Restoration and the Book of Mormon. They requested the Book of Mormon in French and Swahili. Some only understand French, while

others understand both French and Swahili. Very few of our Church members in the Congo can understand or speak a little of the English language. If you meet a person who says they can speak or understand English, you must speak in very simple terms. There were requests for more baptisms. On August 15, we baptized 14 more souls. One young woman who requested to be baptized had a tremendous struggle with the power of evil as we walked together in the water towards the place of baptism. While I began walking with her in the water towards the depth to baptize, she began to twitch, twist and turn her body in all directions. It was very

difficult to control her but I held on to her very tightly, concerned she would slip away. Our brothers and sisters on the shore were observing what was taking place and were very concerned. The spirit upon her was rebuked in the name of Jesus. She quieted down and I baptized and walked her to the shore; she did not experience another episode of this kind. The power of evil is very strong and can only be subdued and rebuked by the power of God. As of this writing we have 73 members baptized in the Congo.

Many young people were in attendance during our worship and question and answer sessions. Their

choirs sound beautiful, and they love to sing. We've asked several of our young brothers, who are ordained Teachers, to take an interest in the young people of their respective branch by starting a mentoring program, so God may raise up young men to be used in "The Great Work of the Lord." The disease of Aids, as is the case in many African countries, is taking the lives of many young people and there is a concern by the parents that the Church help the youth to understand the consequences of immorality and be taught the ways of serving God and the blessing they will receive.

As mentioned earlier in this article, the adversary is not happy to see the work of God move forward and the people to whom the Gospel is preached to be happy. One morning following the day we baptized and confirmed the candidates, Brother Cipeng came to our hotel in preparation for our day's activities. He is a very happy and pleasant person to be with, but he looked very sad. Upon our arrival at this home, I asked what seemed to be the problem. He told me his little grandson of two years had an accident. The family was preparing to cook their meal and had a pot of boiling water on top of a wood burning fire outside of their house. This little boy was running and he fell with his back side into the pot of hot boiling water. Going into the room where this little boy was lying on the lap of his aunt, we saw the burns. It was difficult to look at, big blisters and the skin was very dark and disfigured. Our first thought was to anoint this little angel, that God would extend His healing hand so the skin would heal and his body would not be disfigured nor would there be any complications. I was informed by Brother Cipeng upon my return home that his grandson was healed with no visual scars. "God is good all the time."

**AN INVITATION FOR OUR MISSIONARIES TO BRING THE GOSPEL TO ANOTHER AFRICAN COUNTRY: ZAMBIA.**

Brother Cipeng introduced us to a

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## Editorial Viewpoint . . .

*"But the more part of them did not believe in the words of Samuel; therefore when they saw that they could not hit him with their stones and their arrows, they cried unto their captains, saying: Take this fellow and bind him, for behold he hath a devil; and because of the power of the devil which is in him we cannot hit him with our stones and our arrows; therefore take him and bind him, and away with him" (Helaman 16:6).*

Samuel the Lamanite was a prophet of God who stood on the walls of the city to warn the Nephites about their impending destruction due to sin, but he told them that if they would repent, and turn to God, they would be spared. They would not allow Samuel in their city, but he was still able to get the message across by standing on the wall.

Samuel was a Watchman, and there are Watchmen today who are standing on the walls of our cities to send a warning that impending destruction is coming unless people turn from their sinful ways, and serve the true and living God. It is interesting to note that when they could not destroy Samuel with their stones and arrows, they felt he had a devil, and the devil was protecting him. Today, many people are calling the things that are evil good, and the things that are good, evil. This verse is such an incredible type and shadow of our day and time. Those who are pushing the principles of Christ are being accused of overstepping their boundaries and infringing on the rights of other human beings. Laws have been put into effect or taken away to stop this "perceived evil" perpetrated by the "Watchmen."

The devil is cunning as to deflect blame back on us. People do this all the time when confronted with criticism. One's usual response is, "You are criticizing me for this, but look at what you are doing!" Whenever we tell people they need to repent and turn to the Lord, be prepared for them to tell us how guilty we are, and the awful things we have done. Be prepared for them to turn the tables and say it is WE who need to repent! If we are not spiritually minded, we may not be able to see through this, and think that maybe they are right. We might back down from sending the warning signal to sinners to come to Christ. This is the devil's way of "shutting us up." Samuel didn't back down, but eventually he was chased down and had to flee the walls of their city. The Book of Mormon says that he went into his own land preaching repentance. That was the last we ever heard of Samuel.

Being a Watchman and sending a warning to sinners of impending destruction due to the wrath of God is not the same as judging others (take out the mote in your eye when I have a beam in mine). Unrighteous judgement of others occurs when someone wants to excuse himself or herself for committing their own sins. Samuel was not committing sin. His judgement was a righteous one. His warning was a warning of love. He wanted the Nephites to be spared a horrible destruction. Unfortunately, he was not able to save them as a people, but the scripture says that there were those who believed on his words and repented. I'm sure in the end, they were saved.

We have a responsibility to be Watchmen and send a loving warning to those who need to hear it. There is much history in the Word of God to give us an example. The story of Noah is a great example. The Book of Mormon is full of examples of how even year to year, the people would wax in iniquity more and more, until God said enough is enough. His wrath was unleashed despite the warnings of the Watchmen. We must be aware that if we act as Watchmen, we ARE worthy to do this, and we don't just do this to excuse or minimize our own sins. We must also be prepared for the accusations back to us, and realize this is a tool of the devil.

In these last days, we must stand our ground and stand on the walls of this nation, and preach repentance to a spiritually dying people so that as many as we can reach, will be spared. We must point them to the darkening skies, because if they choose to become one of God's children, then there is no storm that can take them down.

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# The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



## The Words of God Come True

(Genesis 23-27)

In The Church of Jesus Christ we have love and sharing, and in America, we have laws that are fair for everyone. But, in the days of the Bible, long ago, there was not fairness or sharing. Most people stayed in family groups for protection. Each family group was headed by the man who had been the oldest, first born child.

How would you like it if you knew from the time you were small that your older brother would get all of your parent's wealth and be in charge of you? How would you like it if your brother would make arrangements about who you were to marry, and what jobs you would do among the family? This oldest brother would end up with a lot of power over his family's lives, and this was a big job to carry. If you disagreed, there was no place to go and no one to take care of you; people distrusted strangers.

Other special blessings came from being born first, and this was called the "birth right." It meant that the first son born had the right by birth to be the next leader of the family.

In the Bible, in the book of Genesis, is the story of two twin brothers. One, named Esau, was born a few moments before the other twin, Jacob. Esau was a boy who loved hunting and grew up to be his father's favorite son. Jacob was more interested in running the family's huge sheep herds, and was his mother Rachel's favorite son.

Right before the twins were born (Genesis 25:22), Rachel prayed and asked God why these babies felt like they were struggling inside of her. The Lord answered her and told her "Two nations are inside you and two manners of people shall be separated from your bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people and the elder shall serve the younger."

When the babies came out, Esau was first and baby Jacob was holding onto his heels. So, Esau was going to get to be in charge of everything. But, Rachel knew God had a special plan for Jacob.

As the boys grew into young men, I imagine that their unhappiness with each other grew too. One day, when Esau had been hunting for hours, he returned to camp and saw Jacob had food cooking. When he told Jacob to give him some, that he was starving, Jacob replied, "I'll give you the food if you give me the birthright!"

"What good is a birthright if I am dead?" Esau answered.

"Swear to me that I can have the birthright and I will give you this bread and lentil stew to eat," replied Jacob.

Esau agreed and quickly ate the food. But later he became very angry with Jacob.

When more time passed, their father, Isaac grew old and became blind. He told Esau it was time for him to pass on the blessings of God. He told Esau to go, kill a deer, cook it and bring it to him. After the meal, Jacob would say a special prayer to God asking for a blessing for Esau's children that would go on to the end of the earth.

Esau left to go deer hunting. But his mother Rachel had heard her

husband's request. She ran to find her favorite twin, Jacob. Do you think she remembered what God had told her before the twins were born? Do you think that she knew that the second twin must get their father's special prayer and God's blessing?

She told Jacob to quickly kill two young goats for her to cook for his father. Jacob was afraid. He said, "Father will know I am not Esau because he is hairy and I am not. What if he discovers what I am trying to do and puts a cursing from God on me?" Rachel believed God's words.

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### WORD SEARCH

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Missionary  
Benevolent  
Association

## Youth In Action Tse Bonito, New Mexico

By Sister Jennifer Champine

A week before the 2005 GMBA Campout in Flagstaff, Arizona, nine young people from throughout the Church traveled in great anticipation to support the Vacation Bible School (VBS) at the Tse Bonito Branch in New Mexico. As part of the YIA tour, Aaron Palmieri (Aliquippa), Peter Benyola (Cincinnati), Dirk Rustin (Mesa), Andrew McNamara (Kinsman), Ben Hemmings (Fredonia), Amanda Schall (Detroit Branch #1), Erin Light (San Diego), Jen Champine (Detroit Branch #1), and Chelsea Ignagni (Fort Worth) prepared the Tse Bonito building to embark on a Serengeti Trek, which was the theme of the VBS. Each YIA participant was a crew leader in charge of at least six children between the ages of five to twelve years old. Members of the Tse Bonito Branch were in charge of activity stations named Wild Games, Watering Hole Snacks, Sing and Play Roar, Bible Expedition, Critter Crafts, and The Mane Event. The teaching strategies implemented throughout the VBS reflected the successful strategies as presented by the current Education Curriculum Committee materials and training.

Each night the children came in and sang with our Trek Leader, Serengeti Wendy. Then, the very confused Serengeti Eddy would grace us with his presence. He was always in need of some help from God. Sunday night, kids learned how important it is to *Know God*. They learned how knowing God helped Gideon's small army with no weapons defeat the all-powerful Midianites. The first night children were still warming up, meeting new faces and learning all the songs and motions. Many children brought friends and/or relatives Monday night!

We were very happy to see the children enjoy themselves so much that they wanted to share it! This night everyone learned to *Talk to God*. We learned how Daniel refused to give up on prayer, and while in the lion's den, the Lord protected him. We also learned how to pray. A lot of these children did not know how to pray. The crew leaders had the privilege of helping children when they prayed. It was such a blessing hearing these children pray for their parents, friends, and family. They were all so proud once they had ended the prayer. By the end of the night, the children's apprehension had diminished. They all raised their hands to sing in front and help hold signs. All of the children wanted to go up and pray, and it was wonderful to see them learning about Christ.

Tuesday night we learned what it means to *Tell About God*. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were a perfect example. There was no way they would submit to the idol, and even though they were thrown in the fiery furnace, the Lord protected them and kept them from burning. The kids loved this story, and in Bible Expedition they really came to see how it was truly the Lord that spared their lives. That night each crew leader got to take a picture with their group, which was really nice for the kids and the YIA participants. It's something to remember all the wonderful experiences we had. As the week progressed each group grew closer, and it was such a blessing to feel as though we were really having an impact on these children. Each night children had to pick a daily challenge where they would put into action the message learned. If they came back the next night and had fulfilled the challenge, they would receive a leaf to place upon our tree! By Wednesday it was amazing to see how full the tree had gotten. This night we talked about *Loving God*. Jesus died upon the cross because of His love for us. The children were so attentive when they learned how the stone was rolled away, and Jesus was nowhere to be found. That night in Watering Hole Snacks, we made giraffes and learned

how God reaches longer than a giraffe's neck because of His love for us. The children and crew leaders really enjoyed that night. Thursday night was both exciting but sorrowful. We could not wait to be able to share VBS with the parents of the children, and we had a really nice turn out. All of our visitors went around with their children in the daily routine. This night we learned to *Work for God*. Paul and Silas were thrown in prison because they were preaching the Gospel, and even in their cell, they sang praises unto His name. In our Bible Expedition room we sang as loudly as we could to the Lord, and we witnessed the walls of the prison fall down. It was wonderful to see the parents and children singing as loud as they could. We had a wonderful night and praised the Lord for all of His blessings. At the end of the night, we were able to invite the family members of the children back to Tse Bonito and also to the upcoming Conference of Native Americans. Afterwards, we enjoyed some fellowship with many of the parents and children.

In addition to the VBS, we were privileged to visit a beautiful creation, Canyon de Chelly. We hiked down the side of the canyon and saw an ancient Anasazi ruin built in the canyon walls. They call it the White House. The Navajo came to live here after the ancient Native Americans of long ago. We also were able to visit with two women who are sisters from the Philippines. They have attended the branch and are very interested in singing. We had a wonderful time with them and were able to pray, sing and praise God. One afternoon we enjoyed a seminar taught by David Jordan. He taught us more about the Navajo culture, history and many of their beliefs. We had a great time learning of how some of their beliefs perfectly intertwine with some of the future events we believe. In addition to learning about the Navajo beliefs, we were able to see a museum full of arts and crafts as well as music from the Navajo people. The last day of VBS we were able to go to the Navajo

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## Branch and Mission News

### Lake Worth, Florida News

By Sister Josie Jasmin

Brother Mike Radd opened our service on Sunday, May 22nd, 2005 and was inspired to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ and how He hung on the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus came and gave of Himself for you and for me by shedding His blood that we might be saved.

Brother Mike then read from Moroni concerning the baptism of little children and that this was not needed except for those of age and knowledge. Brother Kevin Jasmin continued and spoke on the same theme. We were reminded that when **HE** was on the cross we were on His mind. Yes, every single person was on **His** mind as **He** died for you and me. We were exhorted to never dispute what Christ has taught us, because this Gospel has the authority and we are accountable for all things. Everything must be as Christ instructed us to do. Brother Kevin read scriptures from Alma 39 and 2nd Timothy and of how the Lord knoweth them that are His and to remember this, **"When he was on the cross you were on his mind!"** Brother Andrew DiNardo was visiting today from the Hollywood, Florida Branch and as it turned out Sara Beth Davis asked for her baptism after the service.

On Sunday, May 29th, oh what joy filled our souls as we gathered at the river shore to witness the baptism of Sister Sara Beth Davis into the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We were very happy to have Brother Andrew DiNardo return with us and also have Brother Justin and Sister Tina Severson and their children from Miami attend the baptism. Tears of joy were shed to see this beautiful ordinance once again in our branch. We pray that many more will follow.

Brother Kevin Jasmin baptized

Sister Sara and then we returned to the church for our morning worship and the confirmation of the Holy Ghost upon our sister. *Take My Life, and Let It Be* was sung before the confirmation and Brother Mike Radd, our presiding elder, read the duties of a member. The priesthood formed a circle around our sister and prayed for inspiration to bestow the Holy Ghost upon her. Brother Gene Perri confirmed Sister Sara.

The children who sang and recited in honor of Memorial Day also presented us with a program.

Following, Brother Mike Radd eulogized our beloved Brother Mel Petri. Brother Gene Perri and Brother Kevin Jasmin also spoke words of love for our brother in remembrance of the many visits that they made while he resided at the home (Sutton Place). Brother Mel was transferred on into Paradise as a dutiful member of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Justin then opened the service with joy and enthusiasm. Our brother was thrilled to be a member of this glorious Gospel and continued to expound upon stepping away from the seashore and continuing the journey in faith, fully believing. Brother Justin read from the scriptures in Mosiah 18 and Alma 32 concerning the seed of knowledge and the importance of a good seed. We were advised to earnestly run the race with joy in our hearts. The authority is upon this earth and in this Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have been given this awesome legacy to be a part of the restoration.

Brother Gene Perri continued and expressed himself well and full of inspiration. We were told of our brother's recent evangelistic trip to Arizona and he attested of the affirmation of the saints in that region. Brother Gene also affirmed of the touching of the Spirit of God, a touch that pierces the heart and revives us from time to time. Brother Gene also visited in California and remarked that it is an oasis of fruit, but more importantly is the oasis of the fruit of the spirit among God's people. It was wonderful to see the saints full of the Spirit of God and praising God with all their

hearts with full determination to serve the Lord to the end.

On Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, Brother Gene Perri opened the service and brought wonderful words of life to us. We were reminded to take all our burdens to the Lord. We were never promised a life free of all trials, but we were promised that Jesus would see us through and He would set us free. Our bodies are the temple of God and we need to keep the temple clean. It was very evident that our brother was being touched by the Holy Ghost and the evidence of the love from within our brother was felt by all in attendance.

We were reminded of Joseph of Egypt and the dreams given to him and of young Samuel being called of God and the calling of David, the youngest son of Jesse, anointed by Samuel. Samuel knew that David was being called of God as he stood in the door-way and said, "This is him." He had a heart after the heart of God.

On Sunday June 12<sup>th</sup> we observed the ordinance of feet washing and a beautiful spirit prevailed throughout the day. The message presented today by Brother Kevin Jasmin was that Jesus came to save every soul and many are still waiting to hear this message. Who is going to tell them? We are responsible to give the message to everyone that we possibly can. By the love that we show the world, our neighbors and friends, they should see the difference between us and other people. Hopefully they will inquire of us and begin to question us on what we believe. Jesus showed ultimate love when He bowed to wash the disciple's feet. What a forceful example of love.

On Father's Day our presiding elder, Brother Mike Radd, opened the service and called the hymn, *Near to the Heart of God*. He asked us to think about whether we are near to the heart of God. It is so important to be in tune with God and know that we are pleasing Him and staying near to His heart. By staying near to the heart of God we feel a closeness that cannot separate us from His love and His desire to see us grow spiritually.

A small program was presented



by the Sunday School in honor of Father's Day and the sisters joined in to sing to the fathers the hymn, *I Will Serve Thee*.

A beautiful spirit was felt today as we celebrated the Lord's Day in honor of our Heavenly Father, whose graciousness and love to us can never be replaced. Our Heavenly Father constantly stands with open arms for us to run into for comfort and peace. God has set before us many spiritual fathers who set good examples for us to follow.

Brother Mike read from Luke 2 concerning the child Jesus who went to the temple and was about his Father's business.

Brother Gene Perri continued and brought to our attention the importance of a good father and the example that he sets forth for his family to follow. "A wise son makes a glad father." The apostle Paul was a spiritual father to the saints in his time. Many of us remember the spiritual fathers in our own lives and especially remember their firmness in the Gospel and their strong faith. God was always first and they never put anything else ahead of Him that would hinder their service to Him.

On Sunday June 26<sup>th</sup> Brother Kevin Jasmin opened the service and asked us to consider the cost of not doing the Lord's will and have we counted the cost if we don't do His will? "*Oh soul have you thought what it means to be, without God, without hope for eternity?*"

Brother Kevin read from Mosiah 27 concerning Alma and his conversion and how he had brought dissension among the people by using flattering words. He was awakened from destruction to salvation by the angel of the Lord. What joy they felt when they heard the words, born of the spirit. We were advised to remember the day of our conversion, the joy that filled our hearts, and to always stay strong and firm for the Gospel. Praise God continually that you have been released from the bonds of iniquity and brought to the light of the Gospel. Remember to have your lamps trimmed and ready for when the bridegroom cometh! Stand strong and tall for the Lord!

## News from Forest Hills, Florida

By Sister Alicia Draskovich

With an air of soberness and serious contemplation, the MBA of the Forest Hills Branch met on Wednesday evening, September 21, 2005, to review and discuss the recent message from the Quorum of Twelve "Now Is Our Time." As the Newsletter was passed out and read aloud the message was clear: God has a great work for His Church and is imploring each of us to step up to fulfill our service to Him.

We reviewed Isaiah 65, I Nephi 22, and Hebrews 3 to better understand what we are hoping for and to gain a complete grasp on things yet to come which we will be instrumental in bringing forth. It is in these texts that God declares Himself to the Gentiles and describes the glory of the Peaceful Reign. Isaiah 65:22 tells us "*...for are the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*" We will live to the age of a tree, and before we can even call upon God He will answer us, and while we are speaking to Him, He will have already heard us. "*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together...*"

We were all encouraged to take a stand for what the Lord has called us all to do; for there was not one person present who didn't want to be counted among the blessed in these Latter Days and those yet to come. Brothers and sisters, it was as if God Himself was sitting with us during our meeting; because as our teacher was summarizing our lesson and reminding us to continually strive to be a more righteous people so the Lord would work with us, Brother John Griffith spoke in the Gift of Tongues and immediately followed in the spirit with this interpretation: "*Where then is HIS acceptable place of rest but on a bed of righteousness?*" It was understood that the "bed of righteousness" God referred to was each of us. This is a message for the body of the Church. If God is going to work with us and through us as His Kingdom established

here on earth, we must individually attain an acceptable level of righteousness.

Brother John passionately exclaimed how there are many in the Church who take for granted the glory that we witness from time to time in our lives. He challenged us all to move forward and take the glory with us. We give thanks and praise to our God who has called us out of this world to be found among His chosen and to bring forth His Zion.

## Evangelist Ordination in McKees Rocks, PA

By Sister Betty Ann Manes

Sunday, October 16, 2005 was a special day in the life of Brother Anthony Ricci. Approximately 125 brothers, sisters and friends came from different parts of the vineyard to witness another minister ordained into the Quorum of 70.

The service was aptly opened with a solo by Brother Patrick Monaghan, *A Few Good Men*. Brother Pete Giannetti offered the opening prayer.

Our first speaker was Brother John Genaro who spoke of the tremendous amount of work that is before the Church. He referred to the 4th Psalm, verses 2 and 3; how "the Lord has set apart those that are godly for Himself. They are sanctified to preach the Gospel." He explained how the Lord is opening doors in many lands, and stressed the need to be dedicated to the work of the Lord.

Brother Joel Gehly of Erie, Pennsylvania followed Brother John speaking of the memories when they were in Nepal together, especially Brother Tony's love of the children there. Brother Joel read from the 1st Chapter of Joshua, verses 5 and 6, where it states: "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage..." He stated that our brother "needs to be strong and courageous and not let the adversaries discourage

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