

I CAN HEAR MY SAVIOR CALLING

My Autobiography

By  
V. James and Mary R. Lovalvo

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## PREFACE

I have chosen the title *I Can Hear My Savior Calling* for my autobiography because of a beautiful experience I had in the home of a member of The Church of Jesus Christ. Rather than repeat myself, I will describe this experience in my autobiography under the subtitle "A Voice of an Angel."

This event was not a dream or a vision but a reality. I know that the Lord sent His Angel to sing this beautiful phrase. There were many members present, but only two children and I heard that glorious voice. Since that night long ago, I hear that voice in my mind and heart whenever I am tried by adversities of life, or when I pray for guidance regarding what steps I should take in my ministerial labors.

I wish to also state unequivocally that I have not added or subtracted anything from the experiences

that the Lord has given to me. Each event stands out in my mind as clearly today as the time I had it. I am not attempting to impress anyone, but am telling the truth in complete detail. Who am I that the Lord would condescend to give me these unforgettable experiences? I am nothing but a mere mortal, and yet God has been so very good to me. Thank you, my Lord.

If any skeptics read concerning what I heard, I suggest that they ask God in mighty prayer whether my experience was true or not. To the believers who read this book, I pray that the Lord will give them a similar experience to corroborate my own and fill their hearts as He did mine. In conclusion, I pray that my autobiography will be a blessing to all who read it.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, of course, I am grateful to God for being with me in the writing of my autobiography. His Spirit helped me to recall many things which lay dormant within me. His grace, as always, is more than sufficient to sharpen my mind and make my writing so much easier.

Whether in studying, research, teaching, preaching, or writing; my theme has always been and shall continue to be "Without Him, I can do nothing." It is absolutely marvelous how His Spirit fills the heart and mind so that everything falls in the right place and at the right time. So, thank you, my Lord.

I thank my dear wife for her invaluable help in the writing of this autobiography. Her suggestions and coaching were priceless as usual. She has a gift of expressing her thoughts, which always causes me to react with wonder and admiration.

The reader will find that some events and experiences were written by my wife. It is apropos that she occupies space in this chronicle. In fact, she deserves equal space as she has been with me on many of my labors for the Lord and His Church.

I am especially grateful to my grandnephew David Lovalvo for his willing help and expertise in formatting and editing this work. I pray that the Lord will bless him with the richest gifts of His Spirit. I am thankful to my granddaughter Susan Lovalvo Mon Pere for volunteering to help finalize the punctuation of this book. Finally, to those who helped me in the different areas of my autobiography but wish to remain anonymous, I wish them the best of God's blessings.

## DEDICATIONS

I primarily dedicate my autobiography to God and His Holy Son, Jesus Christ, without whom I could do nothing. Words are insignificant when describing how greatly I have been blessed in the many labors I have accepted and accomplished. The Holy Spirit has guided me as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ, as its minister and a writer since the Lord was gracious to motivate me to ask for my baptism on that wonderful day, July 16, 1933. For this I shall be eternally grateful and shall raise my voice in praise to Him who died for me on the Cross.

Second, I dedicate this book to my wife, Mary, and my children: my son, Leonard James, M. D., and his wife, Vera; my daughter, Priscilla (Penny) Marie, her late husband, Del Carneval, and their late daughter, Lisa Marie.

Third, I dedicate my autobiography to my grandchildren: Barry Loalvo, his wife, Michelle, and my lovely great-granddaughter, Isabella Marie Loalvo; Susan MonPere, her husband, Patrick, and their beautiful newborn son, Patrick Matthew; Scott Carneval and his future wife; Beth (Carneval) Eckhardt, her husband, Timothy, and my darling great-grandson, Nicholas James Eckhardt. I pray that when they read my autobiography, they will remember me with the same love they have given me all of their lives. If I wrote in detail about all my grandchildren, I could probably fill many chapters.

Finally, I dedicate this work to The Church of Jesus Christ, whose members' love and prayers I shall always cherish.

## I GAVE UP A SINGING CAREER

It was a beautiful sunny afternoon. I had been vocalizing for three or four hours, going up and down the scale, expanding my lungs with air, diaphragm firm and steady so that my notes would be strong and mellow. My future was secure. I had just signed a contract with Dr. William Howland, who was teaching voice development at the Institute of Musical Arts in Detroit. With excitement, he had said to me, "Vincenzo (calling me by my Italian name), you have a golden voice. With your singing on the radio and the class of students I shall assign to you, it should be enough to sustain you until you round out your studies in Europe."

Italy, Germany, France! All this, I thought, before my debut and introduction to the world as an operatic baritone. He also added, "In a few years, you will make the world forget about Lawrence Tibbett (who was a leading baritone of the Metropolitan Opera Company at that time)." Of course, I think he said this to inspire me because



Mr. Tibbett was my idol of the voice world. I was on cloud nine!

I was a seventeen-year-old young man when this took place. I was born in the small town of Corleone, Sicily, on November 5, 1911. When I was two years old, my mother and several of my siblings came to the United States of America (Detroit, Michigan) to meet my father and some of my brothers, who had migrated to the United States of America a few years before us. From the time I can remember, I was always musically minded. I recall that as a child I would take two cooking pot covers and walk around the house banging them together until my mother would tell me to "stop that noise." At the age of eight, the school offered its children free musical instruments to learn how to play them. I chose the clarinet, as they did not offer pianos. By the age of twelve, I was already a proficient clarinetist. At thirteen I was the concert master of the all-city high school band and the first clarinetist of the all-city high school orchestra. I also formed a small band of my

own consisting of a drummer, a banjo and guitar player, an accordionist, and me on the clarinet. We played at Italian weddings, infant baptisms, and parties. I did this until my voice changed from a boy soprano to a baritone.

At that moment my thoughts were on a singing career, no longer a career as a musician. Accordingly, I gave up playing the clarinet. I began looking for voice teachers, but could not find one I thought capable. Even if I found one, neither my family nor I could afford to pay for voice lessons. Nonetheless, I eventually learned about Dr. William Howland, a famous voice coach and teacher who taught at the Detroit Conservatory of Music. I went to him, and when he asked me to sing something, I chose an aria: *Di Provenza* from the Opera *La Traviata*. Halfway through the aria he stopped me. My heart sunk. I thought he would tell me to forget singing. Instead, he asked how much musical training I had and could I afford to pay his fees. To the first question I said, "Since I was eight years old." To the second question I told him that I

had no job and could not pay for any lessons. We were in a depression era. To my utter astonishment, he offered me a contract. In simple words the contract stated that he would teach me without fees until I began to have an income from singing. Words could not express my joy at his offer. Here I was with a contract in my hands, and a teacher who would put me on a course of an operatic future.

What more was there in life for me than a successful musical career? This is what I thought; but as the Apostle Paul experienced on the way to Damascus, God had other plans for me.

One day while my parents were sitting on the porch of our home, two persons passed by and said "hello" to them. They introduced themselves as Anthony and Louise Lombardo. After the introductions, all four were surprised to learn they were from the same small town in Italy. During the course of conversation, Mrs. Lombardo told my parents about her small son who was very ill, suffering periodic convulsions. Upon hearing that,

my father told them that he knew a man who practiced magical arts and was able to cure her boy. Following my father's advice, they took their boy to this "healer." He told them that he did in times past practice the dark magical arts; but stopped when he was baptized in a Church that had ministers (Elders) who would pray for her son, and if God wanted to, He could heal him.

A few nights later the Lombardos came to visit us. During our conversation, Mrs. Lombardo (later to become Sister Louise Lombardo) told us they visited the small church of which the former healer had suggested to have her young son anointed. The Church, she told them, was called The Church of Jesus Christ. "However," she continued, "when I heard the Elders speak about salvation, I began to seriously think of saving my soul rather than the healing of the body."

"Nonetheless," she said, "I asked the Elders to pray for my son. They anointed him with oil and laid their hands on his head. They prayed for his healing, and I too prayed that God would heal my

son." As she spoke to us, my brother Joseph showed a lot of interest and began to question her about The Church of Jesus Christ. I nonchalantly concentrated on my own future and career. Religion was the furthest thing from my mind, at least not that religion.

I was born a Catholic; and at the time of our friends' visit, I was singing in the largest Catholic Church choir in Detroit. I thought, "Neither angel nor man will divert me from my goal." As I think back at those thoughts, God must have smiled at my foolishness and stubborn will. The visit finally came to an end, and we bade our friends good night. After a little while my brother Joseph said to me, "Jim, I think I'm going to pay that Church a visit." "Go ahead," I replied, "I'm not interested."

On the following Sunday, my brother went to visit The Church of Jesus Christ. Around one o'clock he returned from the meeting and almost breathlessly exclaimed, "Jim, I have really found the true Church. The people are just wonderful." I

looked at him askance, thinking that he lost his mind.

Still excited, he kept telling about the wonderful meeting he had witnessed and the kindness of the people. "You have to come with me to see for yourself," he added. I made no promises as my mind was only on furthering my singing career. My father kept interjecting, "Now Joe, do not get too excited. Remember, we were born Catholics, and we shall die Catholics."

At that time I smiled inwardly at my father. For although he was a good living man, the only times he attended the Catholic Church were either at weddings, funerals, or infant baptisms. Nevertheless, the following Wednesday evening, being prodded by my brother and merely to pacify him, I agreed to go to the meeting.

"You'll see," he kept telling me. "You'll see what wonderful people they are."

Eventually, we reached the church; and upon entering, I was amazed to see just four bare walls holding up a very unattractive building. "This is

the plainest and smallest church I have ever seen," I thought. There were no pictures on the walls, no statues, nothing to embellish the building. "This is no place for me," I promised myself. I was used to going to elaborate churches, ornamented ostentatiously with gold and silver and with men of great learning to address the congregation. However, through courtesy I stayed for the entire service. As I began to leave, many members of the congregation stopped me, shaking my hand and saying, "God bless you young man." This impressed me, as I had never seen this demonstration of love in any of the churches I had attended.

Even with all this show of affection, I was unmoved as my mind and heart were elsewhere. I had no time for a permanent religious life. My career was foremost in my life. Nonetheless, I continued to attend the Church services with my brothers Joseph and Anthony.

In the course of visiting the Church and listening to the ministers, who possessed no formal education, preach with enthusiasm; mixed

emotions flooded my mind. "Maybe they have something I couldn't see in my own religion," I thought.

Shortly thereafter, my brothers and I began to visit several members of the Church, who related some of their wonderful experiences, which sounded strange to my ears but very interesting and intriguing to say the least. "Pray to God," they would tell me. "He will reveal the truth of the matter to you."

"Why should I pray?" I thought. "My life is filled with singing and studying. I have no time for another religion." Needless to say, I did not pray.

In visiting the members of the Church, I was introduced to the Bible and Book of Mormon. I had never read the Bible nor ever heard of the Book of Mormon. I was also told of the Restoration of the Gospel. I was also informed that an Angel, who called himself Moroni, gave certain Plates to a young man named Joseph Smith; who translated them by the gift and power of God and that this translation became known as the Book of Mormon.



While all these things were impressive, I was still torn between two disturbing facts. All my life I had been told that the church of my parents was the only true church on earth. Now I hear that it is wrong in its principles. They related that the Gospel fell away because of iniquity and had been restored again in these latter times. They also said that The Church of Jesus Christ was the only true Church on earth. Above everything else, I was advised to pray to the Lord and ask Him whether The Church of Jesus Christ and the Restored Gospel were true, and if all I had heard from them was also true. "The Lord will reveal the truth to you," they said. I had never prayed except from a prayer book that someone had written, and, of course, the Lord's Prayer.

After several visits to the Church, I began to feel different than that of the first time I entered its doors. Its simplicity no longer offended me, but rather, it began to intrigue and impress me. The people began to look so sincere and very humble. A wish was now born in my heart to become like

them. I was a very young man of twenty-one years, very haughty and proud of my accomplishments thus far in the world of music.

The more I came in contact with the members of The Church of Jesus Christ, the more I began to realize that I was reaching a time of discovery and decision: discovery of pride that had to be humbled and of a soul that needed salvation. I had to decide what to do about my singing career. I also had to decide whether I should be baptized.

We received many visits from the members of the Church and especially from a particular young man named Marco Randazzo (later shortening his name to Mark Randy). Listening to him tell of the Restored Gospel and of many wonderful experiences, I began to feel an interest generating within me to hear more. My father, however, was very indignant that we should even entertain any thought of joining the Church. He very sternly forbade us to pay any attention to Mark or anyone else. In the interim, Mark introduced us to his parents, Salvatore and Fara; his sisters, Virginia,

Mary, and Sarah; and his brother, Michael. At this time, Mark's parents and eldest sister, Virginia, belonged to the Church.

My brothers and I continued to attend the Church services and visit many of its members. One incident seems apropos to mention. One evening we visited Brother Carmen Campitelli and his wife, Helen. After we had been in their home for a while, Sister Campitelli related an experience she had prior to our visit. The following is what she told us.

She was apprehensive about the manner in which to tell us of the Restored Gospel since we were very young men and had never been exposed to religious conversations. She prayed and fasted the whole day of our visit to them. As we entered their home that night, she saw a light surround us and heard a voice telling her to speak to us freely as we were to be His servants. We were amazed at this experience. We had never heard anything like this in our lives. We had a wonderful visit with them that evening.

On Saturday evening, July 15, 1933, three months after our initial visit to The Church of Jesus Christ, my brother Joseph told me that he was contemplating baptism the next day. Turning to my brother Tony and me, he asked, "Are you going to be baptized also?" I replied that I was thinking about it. Tony said that he was not sure.

On Sunday morning, July 16, 1933, while Brother Ishmael D'Amico was preaching on the 55th chapter of Isaiah, wherein it reads, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters...." a wonderful outpouring of the Spirit of God was being enjoyed by the congregation. Suddenly, I began to feel my heart beat like a triphammer; and rising to my feet, I asked to be baptized. My brother Joseph followed me in requesting baptism; and immediately after him, my brother Anthony asked to be baptized.

I was twenty-one years old when I was baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ. At twenty-two years of age I was ordained a Teacher of Detroit, Branch #1 in Michigan. I was twenty-three

years old when I was ordained an Elder, twenty-five when I was ordained an Evangelist, and twenty-nine when I was ordained an Apostle.

From the time we were baptized, my father gave us a lot of opposition. He was furious that I might resign my singing career. He was angry with my brother Joseph, blaming him for persuading me to join the Church. My eldest brother, Dominic, wouldn't speak to me for twenty years. My brother-in-law Matthew predicted that within one year we would be in a mental institution. They were utterly astounded when one year later my father and mother were baptized. Now, they thought that we had certainly gone insane, but all of them were wrong. At this writing, my father, mother, and brother Anthony have gone to their reward in Paradise. Joseph and I are still serving God with all our hearts. Joseph was ninety-two years old on March 1, 2002, and I was ninety years old on November 5, 2001, and still going strong in the service of the King.

For me, serving the Lord is the most important thing in my life. Although I am filled with the painful torture of arthritis throughout my body, God has given me the strength to endure this misery. Each Sunday three brothers (Greg Baer, Michael Knutsen, and Anthony DeCaro) alternate in taking my wife and me to church. They travel a distance of 240 miles round trip to do this for us. I can never repay these brothers for this wonderful act of love. I know that the Lord will reward them a hundred different ways.

## MY FATHER'S ACCIDENT IN ITALY

One day in the countryside of Palermo, my father and two of his friends were in a small hut, shielding themselves from a severe thunderstorm. In anger, one of the men cursed God for this inconvenience. As he did so, a bolt of lightning struck the hut, setting it on fire. The man who swore was killed instantly; the other man was injured. My father suffered third degree burns

from his neck to most of his torso. He was taken to a hospital that had no burn facility, where he was provided very primitive treatment.

My mother, who at that time was expecting a child, stayed with him for weeks, helping to move her husband from one bed to another every few minutes because of the terrible pain he was suffering. My father was in the hospital for one year. Finally, he was healed but bore the scars of his burns throughout his life. My mother, who was a devout Catholic, offered many prayers and novenas to Mary the mother of Jesus, asking her to spare her husband's life. God in His everlasting mercy revealed to my mother who was the real healer of her husband; otherwise, she probably would not have been baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ. Now, she had no more doubts or fears; her spirit soared with happiness as she was immersed in the cold waters of the Detroit River. It was a miracle indeed.

God has His own peculiar, yet wonderful way of revealing Himself to people. To some, He gives

dreams and visions. To others, he shows the way through the Scriptures. Regardless of the manner in which human beings receive the answer, it is always an amazing experience.

The vast wisdom of God is always beyond my comprehension. He is from everlasting to everlasting, and His knowledge and power are beyond the ken of mankind. For this I praise His Holy name.

## MY MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE

Although my mother was happy about the baptism of her three sons, she was still bewildered why The Church of Jesus Christ did not have religious statues or pictures on its walls, especially of Mary whom she adored. One night she dreamed that she was on the shore of a large body of water, and coming towards her were two personages walking on the water. One was a beautiful woman and the other was an imposing younger man. As the two walked on shore, she recognized the



woman as Mary, the mother of Christ. Immediately, she fell on her knees in the act of adoration. Gently, Mary raised her up and told her not to worship her. Surprised, my mother said, "Why can't I worship you? Aren't you the one who spared my husband's life?" Smiling, Mary pointed to the young man and responded, "It was not I who healed your husband but my Son." My mother awoke, amazed, and was convinced that it was Jesus Christ whom she must worship and not religious statues or pictures. This experience encouraged my mother to ask for baptism.

My mother and father asked for their baptisms on the same Sunday morning. The hearts of my brothers and me were filled to overflowing when our parents made their wonderful decision.

#### THE REVELATIONS THAT ENCOURAGED ME TO RESIGN MY SINGING CAREER

After my baptism, I began to hunger and thirst for knowledge relative to the Apostasy and

Restoration of the Gospel. I sought God's help in fasting and prayer. I read scores of books and much literature concerning the above items and searched for answers in the Word of God. I also sought knowledge by asking older brothers in the Ministry numerous questions. I became insatiable in my quest for knowledge and understanding.

During that time, I was still singing on the radio, in musical comedies, and in concerts. This was part of my mindset and life. I prayed for guidance. I fasted for days at a time that God would show me what course to take. Finally, after nine months of continuously praying, the merciful Lord revealed to me in a dream that I must relinquish my career if I wanted to be His servant. The following is the dream.

I found myself (in the dream) about to give an examination on the Italian language to a large class of students that Dr. Howland had assigned to me. Brother Thurman S. Furnier (one of the Apostles of the Church) appeared in the room. He walked toward me and said, "Brother Lovalvo, this is not

the thing God wants you to teach, but this....” As he was telling me what to teach, I awoke. I immediately fell on my knees and asked the Lord to reveal to me what Brother Furnier was about to tell me. I got in bed again and no sooner than I fell asleep, I dreamed that I was in one of our Church meetings. Sitting on the rostrum were three Apostles: Brothers Ishmael D’Amico, Joseph Dulisse, and Thurman S. Furnier. When Brother Furnier saw me sitting in the congregation, he motioned me to come on the rostrum with him and preach to the congregation. I was amazed at his invitation and answered him, saying, “But I am not a minister.” He said, “Come up here. This is what God wants you to teach.” I arose and made my way to the rostrum. Upon reaching it, I turned to the congregation and began to preach about the things of God. While I was speaking, the ceiling and the roof of the church opened; and from the heavens, a glorious white light encircled me. Suddenly, a beautiful mantle came down and rested on my shoulders, reaching to my feet. An

Angelic voice spoke from heaven, saying, "This is the mantle of Elijah." At this, I awoke. Suddenly, the knowledge of what I should do was revealed to me.

I knew my calling was to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The next day, I wrote a letter of resignation to my teacher, Dr. William Howland, and to the Institute of Musical Arts. Dr. Howland answered my letter immediately, pleading with me to continue my studies and not give up such a promising career. He reminded me that I was ready to go to Europe to finish my studies with all expenses paid. I answered him that what I had written was final. I cannot say that it was a happy day when I wrote that letter of resignation. My heart was tearing apart because I loved music and singing. Many tears fell on the stationery as I wrote. However, I could do no less. The Lord had spoken, and I had to obey. I was determined to be a follower of Christ all the way.

Although I was baptized, I still continued with my singing. As I stated above, I struggled

periodically in prayer and fasting for nine months, asking the Lord whether I should continue singing or give it up and consecrate myself to His service, completely. During one of my fasting periods, I opened the Bible and suddenly found my finger under the word "sing". I was elated. I was sure that God had answered my prayers; but to my chagrin, I found no joy singing at concerts or other functions. I was devastated. If the Lord had caused my finger to point to the word "sing", why did I feel so miserable? Filled with curiosity, I opened the Bible to where once my finger had underscored the word "sing"; and to my amazement I read, "Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song and His praise in the congregation of saints" (Ps. 149:1).

Now, I truly rejoiced. God had answered my prayers. In the interim, I received a letter from my voice coach asking me to reconsider my decision. With the strength of the Lord, I answered his letter (albeit with tears) that I was adamant in what I had done. I did make one concession, however. I

consented to sing once more at a charity concert at the Masonic Temple, accompanied by Detroit's Symphony Orchestra.

Immediately after I gave up my career, I was blessed with many wonderful experiences. I heard the voice of an Angel singing, and I had walked with one of the three Nephites.

I want to interject that in 1947 my wife and I, along with our children, Leonard James and Priscilla Marie, went to California. There, my brother Dominic and I renewed our relationship. My brother-in-law Matthew's prediction, of course, was false. I am still in the Church, thanks to God. As I look back in retrospect, I am filled with praise to God for giving me the privilege of obeying the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ and becoming a member of His Holy Church. My heart is filled with songs of redeeming love to Him who bore the Cross for me on the hill of Calvary, and so I sing:

There is no one can compare  
With Christ my Savior,  
Whose love so tender and rare,

Is like no other.  
He died on Calvary's tree,  
He died for you and me.  
And now I'll serve Him well,  
Until He calls me home.

### THE VOICE OF AN ANGEL

Together with a few young brothers, we visited the home of Sister Marietta Ruzzi, where we found several brothers and sisters visiting there as well. One of the sisters was lying on the couch, as she was apparently ill. During the course of the evening, I went to wash my hands. While doing so, I heard one of the bedroom doors open slowly and a most beautiful voice singing, "I Can Hear My Savior Calling, I Can Hear My Savior Calling." Then, the bedroom door closed slowly and the voice stopped singing. I listened in amazement at this glorious voice, for I had never heard its equal, although I had listened to many beautiful voices in my time. I thought, "I must go in the living room

and ask to whom this glorious voice belongs.” When I entered the room where all the brothers and sisters were gathered, I asked who had been singing.

Sister Ruzzi replied, “Brother Jim, no one has left this room; and no one has been singing as the sister on the couch is too ill.”

As she was saying this, my heart began to beat as though it would burst. Immediately, I knew that I had been a recipient of a wonderful experience. As she finished speaking, two of her foster children (Dominic and Marianne Moraco) came running up from the basement crying, “Mother, mother, we have just heard a beautiful voice singing, “I Can Hear My Savior Calling, I Can Hear My Savior Calling.” When I heard this, I became faint with joy. I related to all present that I had heard this same voice at the same time the children had. As I was relating this, a fire, a glorious fire enveloped me from head to foot, burning me with a heavenly flame. I have no words to describe this divine



sensation. It left me speechless. Needless to say, all present rejoiced at this experience.

We knelt to pray, but I could not because of the fire I felt in my body. I knew I had heard the voice of an Angel and also felt the great operation of the Holy Spirit. This experience shall always remain indelibly written upon my heart.

### I HEARD ANOTHER ANGEL'S VOICE

Although it was still in the Great Depression Era, I found a job where the work was so hard that when I went home at night, at times my exhaustion left me without appetite. I never worked so hard in my life. Nonetheless, I never missed the midweek services, despite my weariness.

While working one day, a terrible fatigue came upon me. I prayed silently that God would come to my rescue. As I continued praying, I heard above the noise of the work area a sweet voice singing, "My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine." I listened, enthralled, and when the singer came to

the end of the chorus, "If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now," I broke out in tears. All tiredness left me, and strength such as I have never felt surged through me. I resumed working, glorifying the Lord silently. All through the day the joy of that glorious song sung by an Angel from heaven lifted the burden of my work. Often during the day, some men had asked if anything was wrong with me because of the redness in my eyes. They did not know that it was from the tears that kept welling in them. I would answer that I had just received a wonderful message which had delighted me. Some would say that they had never seen me so happy. Of course, I was happy. God had listened to my prayer, saw my plight, and His love and Spirit lifted me beyond description. What a joy I experienced that day. I went home, bathed, and ate with gusto. My parents wondered at the change that had come over me. Tearfully, I told them what had happened, and we rejoiced together. Praise His name!

## MY EXPERIENCES CONCERNING THE THREE NEPHITES

My first experience with one of the three Nephites was shortly after I gave up my career as an opera singer.

One spring day in 1934, a group of young brothers and I went to visit a widowed sister, whose eldest son had recently been baptized. After a short while, we bade her goodbye. As we were leaving, we looked across the street where another brother and his wife lived; and there on the porch we saw a tall man with a large basket of notions (thread, needles, etc.), selling his wares to the sister. We waved to her and started up the street towards Shoemaker Avenue.

We had walked no more that fifty feet when suddenly, there he was across the street; the same man whom we had seen selling his products to the sister. He was on the other side of the street. Walking slowly but firmly about thirty feet in front of us, holding that large basket with his right arm, he was making his way towards Shoemaker

Avenue, which was about a hundred feet away. Without giving thought, one of the young brothers and I quickly ran across the street to help him, thinking that perhaps his vision was impaired. Reaching him, I put my right arm through his left arm. The young brother walked on his right side about three feet away from him because of the large basket he was carrying.

As I touched him, he looked at me with the most beautiful eyes I had ever seen. There was nothing wrong with his vision. The wisdom of the ages seemed to reflect in his eyes. He began to speak to us with a beautifully modulated voice, telling us to be faithful to God and serve Him with all our hearts and strength, and in turn, He would bless us all the days of our lives.

Only too quickly we reached Shoemaker Avenue and gently led him across. As we reached the other side, I disengaged my arm from his; and we bade each other goodbye, thinking only that we had helped a nice man across the street.

But where would he go? I looked around the corner, but he was nowhere to be seen. Shrugging my shoulders, I joined the young brothers; and after a while we separated, going to our respective homes.

That night I met again with the brothers; and during a lull in the conversation, I remembered the man with the basket of notions. Quickly, I turned to the young brother who had volunteered with me to help him across the street and asked, "Wasn't that a large basket he was holding with his right arm on your side?"

"My side?" He replied incredulously. "He was holding the basket on your side, and you had to walk three feet away from him. I was holding his right arm with my left arm."

"That's impossible," I replied. "I had my right arm through his left arm all the way across Shoemaker."

Being babes in the Church, we actually began to discuss about who was holding either one of the

man's arms. We departed from one another with a feeling of frustration.

That night I knelt at my bedside and prayed earnestly to the Lord.

"Dear Father," I pleaded, "I know that I had my right arm through the man's left arm, yet my brother says that he had his left arm through the man's right arm. Please do not let the devil confound me. I know what I did."

While praying in this manner, I heard an audible voice say, "Have you forgotten that I have three Nephites still walking on the face of the earth?" When this voice spoke to me, I felt the glory of God come upon me. His Spirit filled me with a joy I had never experienced. Words cannot express that moment of bliss I shared with the Lord! I had walked with one of the three Nephites!

Sixty-eight years have passed at this writing, and the memory of that wonderful experience is still as fresh today as it was that day when I looked into the eyes of a man blessed with almost total immortality. I had touched him, but sadly did not

know who he was until God spoke to me that night, revealing his identity.

Please note that two or more witnesses have corroborated every experience I have had involving the three Nephites. That has been my assurance that what I have seen or been given is from God. These experiences come from a divine source, and I cannot thank God enough for His loving-kindness and condescension to a mere mortal as I.

As I look in retrospect, I am amazed at the superb manner in which the Lord has poured His Spirit upon me and given me such wonderful experiences.

## I SAW THE FATHER AND THE SON

My brother Joe and I had jobs in a small factory as polishers and buffers. The machines had a wheel on each end that while operating would spin at 3500 rpm. Joseph and I worked side by side. One Sunday the Ladies' Circle of Detroit, Branch #1

asked us if we would join them in fasting and prayer the next day. We accepted the invitation wholeheartedly.

On Monday morning we went to work without eating breakfast. While working at the machine, I heard, above the din and noise of the many machines, Sister Helen Campitelli's voice speaking in the gift of tongues. When I heard her voice, my body shook with excitement. I glanced at the clock and saw that it was five minutes till ten.

Turning to my brother, I said in a loud voice, "Joe, did you hear anything at this moment?" Filled with emotion, he said that he too heard Sister Campitelli's voice. I said to my brother, "Since God has blessed us to hear the sister's gift of tongues, let's pray that the Lord, in His loving-kindness, would give us the interpretation also." We started to pray fervently within ourselves, still working at our machines. Suddenly, I had one of the greatest experiences of my life.

I felt my spirit leave my body and float upward towards the sky. I could feel the wind caressing my



face and blowing gently through my hair. I happened to look downward, and I saw the sisters of the Ladies' Circle on their knees praying. In the middle of the room there was an altar. Upon it, beating in perfect rhythm, was the largest human heart I have ever seen. Smoke kept rising from the altar, and I followed its course upward. As I kept looking up, I saw God, in vision, sitting on His throne, and Jesus Christ standing on His right. I noticed that Christ was looking down where the sisters were praying. He had a soft, sweet smile on His dear face, and tears of joy rolled slowly down His cheeks.

Turning to God, He said, "Father, behold your children." Looking at the sisters, the Lord said, "This day, your prayers have reached My throne." In a twinkling of an eye, I found myself at the machine, filled with wonder at this glorious experience. When I related it to my brother, he said, "Praise God, Jim, for His love towards us." Then, he told me that for a few minutes my face had lost

all its color, and it had become very pale. That was the time I had been carried away in the spirit.

A few days later when the sisters and many brothers were gathered together, I related my experience. The effusion of His Holy Spirit filled the room. Tongues were spoken and interpretation was given that God would always answer prayers offered in sincerity and faith. I cannot thank the Lord enough for this marvelous experience. Remember, dear readers, this was a vision of the Father and the Son while my spirit was transported upwards. I did not see the actual personages of God or Jesus Christ. Let the reader understand that no one can see God or Christ in the mortal state. His Holy Spirit can appear in any form God desires. Nephi, the son of Lehi, had an experience where he saw a man, but knew it was the Spirit of God. It is written: "And I said unto him: To know the interpretation thereof—for I spake unto him as a man speaketh; for I beheld that he was in the form of a man; yet nevertheless, I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord; and he spake unto me as a

man speaketh with another" (1 Nephi 11:11). I am grateful that the Lord permitted me to have this vision.

### THE WILL OF GOD CONCERNING MY CALLING AS A MINISTER

In retrospect, I remember the mantle of Elijah that had fallen on my shoulders in that wonderful dream God gave me so long ago. In that dream, He revealed His will relative to what I should teach; I will now relate another beautiful experience that also tells of the will of God concerning my calling into the Ministry.

A few months after I gave up my singing career, the young men of Detroit, Branch #1 volunteered to clean the church for a period of six months. We went to the church every Saturday morning to do that work. We fasted and prayed while cleaning the building. One Saturday after all the young men left, my brother Joseph, Mark Randy, and I decided to remain in church and

continue to pray. We went to the front of the sanctuary on the left side of the rostrum and knelt in fervent prayer. While we were praying, I heard the front door of the church open and footsteps come toward us. At that time I thought it was one of the brothers returning to pray with us.

As we continued praying, I heard whoever had come in, arise. I then felt him lay his hand on my head. As he did so, I felt a wonderful blessing flow through me. We arose from praying, rejoicing in the Lord for His mercy. When I looked around to see who had come in the church, no one was there. I related what I had heard and seen. To my utter surprise, Joe and Mark told me that they had the same experience as I. We were amazed beyond measure, yet blessed exceedingly at what we had heard and felt.

On the way home we decided to visit Sister Marietta Ruzzi. While we were conversing with her, she asked if anything unusual had happened at Church. We wondered why she asked. She said, "This morning, while I was fasting and praying for

you brothers, I had a vision wherein I saw the three of you kneeling at the left side of the rostrum praying. While you were praying, a tall man clothed in white entered the church, and coming where you were knelt with you. Then, he arose and laid his hand on Brother Jim, then on Brother Joe, and last on Brother Mark. He also laid a crown on each of your heads.”

When she told us this, we related what we had experienced. What a glorious blessing we received in her home that day. Just to know how mysteriously God reveals Himself to mere mortals is beyond human understanding. After that experience, we were sure that God would call us into the Priesthood of His Holy Son, Jesus Christ.

I have enjoyed and am enjoying the fruits and blessings attendant upon me in all my ordinations. There have never been any regrets in my heart for having made a decision to give up my career and cast my lot with the people of God.

Sixty-eight years have passed since I was baptized as a member of The Church of Jesus

Christ, and I can testify that I am as happy to be with God's people now as I was so long ago. The Lord has been good to my family and me through all these years. In adversities or not, He has always seen us through every experience. In good times or bad, God has kept us in His loving-kindness and in the shadow of His love. Praise His Holy name!

#### HOLDING MEETINGS IN WINDSOR, CANADA

During my days as a Teacher of Detroit, Branch #1, I was sent by the Presiding Elder, Brother Thurman S. Furnier, to hold meetings with the few brothers and sisters in Windsor, Canada. I was sent to that mission because we did not have enough English-speaking Elders to send there. I was permitted to preach and teach but not to perform any of the functions reserved for the Ministry. For several months I did as I was instructed until I was called and ordained as an Elder.

After my ordination into the Ministry, I continued visiting Windsor, along with other

ministers. A year later my brother Joseph was ordained as an Elder, and eventually he became the Presiding Elder of the Windsor Branch.

The blessings of the Lord were many and often granted by God. His Holy Spirit was manifested in manifold ways: visions, dreams, preaching, testimony, and healings. There was never a Sunday that we left the meeting without rejoicing in the glorious manner in which God had manifested Himself.

## I MARRIED A WONDERFUL GIRL

Among the many blessings of God to me, there is a special one of falling in love with a beautiful girl, who was later to become my wife. She was Brother Mark Randy's sister Mary. However, I delayed telling her of my love, or the desire I had that we should be married. Instead, I asked the Lord that if it was His will, she would become my wife. I also prayed that the Lord would reveal to her the truth of the Restored Gospel that she might

come to Church and give herself to the Lord. I wanted a mate that would be a help to me, naturally and spiritually. I wanted nothing to come between me and my dedication to Jesus Christ. God truly answers prayers. Can you imagine my joy when on one Sunday morning she asked to be baptized? She was well aware that baptism in our Church is performed in an open body of water. This was no obstacle; she was only too happy to take the first step into His Church through baptism.

It was a cold, wintry December day when the saints gathered at the river to witness Mary's baptism. Brother Joseph Gianzante (the Elder who would baptize Mary), along with others, walked on the ice until they found a separation in it. Together, they helped her into the cold water. Before going into the water, her father, Brother Salvatore Randazzo, told her to look up to the heavens before the brother immersed her. When she looked up, the heavens opened; and she saw a beautiful woman dressed in white holding a male child in her arms.



The child had a crown of roses, which he laid on her head. She was still filled with the glory of that vision as she came up out of the water. She did not realize that the baptism was over until the Deaconess began wiping her face. Filled with joy, she began to tell of the wonderful vision the Lord had given her. She also testified that when she stepped into the water, she did not feel its icy impact because she was in another dimension, taken away in the spirit as she saw that beautiful vision.

When hands were laid upon her for the reception of the Holy Spirit, there was indeed a special blessing. Someone saw a hand writing the name of Jesus Christ on her forehead.

Now, I knew for a certainty that the Lord had chosen her to be my wife.

Shortly afterwards, I proposed to her and was elated at her acceptance. She also told me that God had come to her in a dream telling her, "Mary, you must help this man and stand by his side. Life will not always be sweet and peaceful, but I will bless

you both and be with you all the days of your lives." What more assurance did I need than that? Praise God for His tender love!

One day while visiting my future wife, I told her that I would not be seeing her for about one week. Although surprised, she did not ask me the reason. I did not tell her because I was going to fast and pray for God's blessings upon me. The next week when I visited her again, she related the following dream.

"I was very concerned that he would not be seeing me as he was in the same city. I was new in the Church and did not know what to do other than pray. During that week, I had a dream where I found myself at my future husband's home. I was curious about his absence. I knew that his family home had an attic. I went up to the attic and saw him sitting down with fabric on his lap, working very intently, and did not lift his head. He was stitching a royal blue and gold suit that appeared to be of royalty. I was so excited that he was preparing himself for His service and dedication."

When I heard the dream, I was amazed as I had been fasting all week for God's will towards me. Shortly thereafter, I was called and ordained into the Ministry, fulfilling her dream that the suit represented the authority of God.

On June 20, 1936, we were joined in wedlock by Apostle Thurman S. Furnier. While we were repeating our vows, a sister (Helen Campitelli) saw two lights over our heads that came together becoming one light. She heard a voice saying, "So shall these two be joined together in My Name." Eventually, we were blessed with a son and a daughter, Leonard James and Priscilla Marie.

My son grew to be a very fine man and a wonderful surgeon. We are proud of his skills, integrity, and compassion towards his patients. My daughter is a lovely and gracious woman. In the process of time, she became a certified medical transcriptionist and was supervisor of a transcription department for over twenty years. They both were baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ at an early age. My son married a wonderful

girl, Vera Bologna. Of that union, God gave us two beautiful grandchildren: Barry Richard and Susan Elizabeth. My daughter wed a fine man, Del Carneval, who became a dedicated minister of The Church of Jesus Christ. He was a school counselor and administrator until his untimely death. From the fruits of that marriage, the Lord gave us three lovely grandchildren: Lisa Marie (deceased), Beth Kaylynn, and Scott James. My wife and I are very proud of our children and grandchildren. All my children and grandchildren are well educated and very successful. At this writing, I am proud to say that we are great-grandparents. My granddaughter Beth gave birth to a beautiful boy named, Nicholas James.

We lost our first grandchild, our beloved Lisa Marie Carneval, at the very early age of twenty-two months. As God gave her to us, He also took her home with Him. God's will apparently was not to keep her among the living. As a gardener plucking his most beautiful flower, the Lord took

our beloved Lisa Marie from us to adorn His throne and be safe in the arms of Jesus Christ.

My son-in-law, Del, died from cancer approximately twenty years after Lisa Marie's death. I never heard him complain during the agonizing two years of suffering from that terrible disease. Even at the end, his concern was for his wife and children whom he loved so very much.

If a "hall of fame" for faithful members of the Church had been created by the Lord, I am sure that Del Carneval would have been inducted in that heavenly hallowed shrine.

IN MEMORY OF MY GRANDDAUGHTER,  
LISA MARIE CARNEVAL

### I Love You Papa

"I love you, Papa." The thrill of hearing these words from my first granddaughter's lips will never fall upon my ears again. Lisa Marie died at the age of twenty-two months from the dreadful

disease leukemia. She would have been in her mid-thirties at this writing.

I remember my daughter's agony at her prenatal labor, but more vividly the ecstasy of giving birth to a beautiful baby girl. I remember the joy my wife and I felt as we looked at her in the nursery. We were overcome at the wonder of having been granted such a beautiful grandchild.

"What did you name her?", was the first thing I asked my daughter, Penny.

"Lisa Marie," she replied, as she cuddled her first-born child. "Isn't she beautiful, Dad?"

"Just gorgeous," the new grandfather answered.

"Let me take a peek at my little granddaughter," I said.

"Be careful," my wife admonished me, "you haven't held a baby in a long time." She thought I wanted to hold her.

"I just want to look at her, that's all.

She looks like an angel," I said, as Penny turned the baby towards me.

“Spoken like a typical grandfather,” my wife said, laughing with joy.

“By the way, how does it feel to be a father?” I asked my son-in-law, Del. “I can’t get over it,” he replied, “I feel all prickly inside.”

“You’re going to feel more than that when you have to get up at all hours of the night to warm her bottle and maybe change her diaper,” I joked.

Then the day arrived when Lisa Marie was brought home from the hospital. What a happy occasion! Friends and relatives were coming and going, giving congratulatory gestures, which were received happily from parents and grandparents.

As the days passed, she seemed to grow more beautiful. It was a delight to watch her every little move. I could not wait for the time when she would call me “Papa.” When I held her occasionally, I could not believe my good fortune at having this beautiful grandchild. Often, I would kneel in prayer, thanking the Lord for this gift in our lives. She was doted upon by her parents and adored by my wife and me.

Six months had passed, and one day as I sat at the piano, Lisa came to my mind. I visualized her cute little crooked smile (a Mona Lisa type), her button nose, and eyes that would shine like stars. Everything she did was magical and lovable. Suddenly, I felt a melody begin to form in my mind; and within an hour, I composed a song for my little angel.

“LISA MARIE”

Kissable, adorable, embraceable, and sweet,

Everything you do is lovable,

My Lisa Marie.

Button nose, and cutest lips,

And eyes that shine like stars,

Everyone can see you're lovable,

My Lisa Marie.

Angels sent you down to me,

Now can't you see that I'm in love,

I'm in a whirl, my darling,

Though you're only six months old.

With your Mona Lisa smile,

You're like a dream come true,



Everything you do is lovable,  
My Lisa Marie.

The next time I held her in my arms, I sang it softly to her. She smiled and cooed, and put her little arms around my neck as though to tell me, "I love you, Papa."

When she was eight months old, she took her first steps, to the delight of us all. This, of course, was an event for celebration. She would laugh delightedly each time she would walk from Mommy to Daddy and from "Gamma" (my wife) to me (Papa). Each day she grew more beautiful, more vivacious, and more lovely. Who could ever imagine that in a few months she would only be a sweet memory, that the ache in my heart would never cease. Even now, years later, my heart breaks as I think of my darling, Lisa Marie, and how much she suffered before she passed away.

Riding in the car one Sunday afternoon while holding Lisa on my lap, I attempted to play with her as I usually did but noticed that she was listless

and unsmiling. This was not my Lisa. This was not the little girl of laughter and boundless energy. She was sixteen months old at that time. I also noticed a few black spots on her back that had not been there before.

"Penny," I said to my daughter who was sitting in the front seat with her husband. "There is something wrong with Lisa. She seems so listless."

"I don't know, Dad. She may be coming down with something," she replied.

"I think you had better take her to a doctor. I do not like these black spots on her back, and her stomach feels a little hard."

"Don't be such a worrywart," my wife said to me. "She may be a little tired."

"Maybe. Nevertheless, let a doctor examine her."

A few days later, seeing that Lisa was not improving, my daughter made an appointment with a pediatrician. Following the examination, the doctor ordered blood work. He called my daughter with the results that the baby had

anemia, leukemia, or something else. He hospitalized her overnight, and then told Del and Penny that Lisa should be taken to the Children's Hospital in Los Angeles because it might be leukemia. My daughter and son-in-law were devastated. Something died within me when I heard this. A premonition of doom settled in my heart. My daughter's face became white as a sheet. I wanted to take her in my arms to comfort her as when she was a child.

"It's going to be all right, honey," I said, "some doctors just like to tell their patients the worst."

She looked at me and then turned away, holding her little girl tightly to her bosom. Not a word came from her lips. I knew she was grieving; her heart was tearing apart. She and her husband got in their car and drove away.

"Oh Jim," my wife cried as we were driving home, "Do you think our baby will be all right?"

"Don't worry, darling, doctors can be wrong sometimes."

I tried to comfort my wife, but to no avail. The tears she had held back in the doctor's office now came streaming down her cheeks as she sobbed her heart out.

We stopped at the church, and for more than an hour we prayed to the Divine Creator to be merciful towards our Lisa. We left the church feeling that we had placed our granddaughter in good hands.

Several days later, my daughter telephoned to tell us that she had an appointment for Lisa at the Los Angeles Children's Hospital. We went to the hospital, and the diagnosis we heard from the doctor was not favorable. We had waited with great anxiety for him to tell us concerning Lisa's condition. After some time had passed, he came into the office. With deep compassion he said to my daughter, "I'm truly sorry to tell you this, but your little girl has leukemia." Leukemia! The very word was a dagger to my heart. I heard Penny gasp and my wife letting out an anguished sob. The earth seemed to open up beneath me. Leukemia!

Leukemia! "No, no," I felt like shouting, "Not my baby."

"However," the doctor continued, "We may be able to arrest the disease with medication. There is always hope that some new discoveries may emerge to benefit Lisa."

"That's what you tell everyone," I wanted to shout at him. "Show me one child that has ever been healed of this dreadful disease." But I held my peace. Lisa's parents and my wife were suffering enough without adding to their grief.

The doctor then suggested they leave Lisa in the hospital to begin treatments. I held Lisa in my arms before leaving the hospital, trying hard to keep back the tears and the anguish from my voice as I bade her goodbye.

"Bye, Papa," she said, as she put her little arms around me. "I love you, Papa."

"Goodbye, my darling, we'll see you tomorrow."

I can still see her looking at us with those big beautiful eyes, probably thinking, "Why are you leaving me here?"

Outside of the hospital, I asked Penny and Del if they would like to have dinner with us as no one had eaten yet.

"No, Dad, I just want to be alone for a while," she replied.

Thus, began the nightmare: going to the hospital on a daily basis, taking Lisa home whenever the doctors thought that the disease was in remission, back to the hospital for more treatments. There were days when our baby would be perky and vivacious, and other times when she was listless and in much pain. I thought that she would waste away as I had seen other children do, but she did not. Only her hair fell out because of the medication. Instead of getting thinner, she seemed to grow more beautiful.

In time though, she began to suffer very much as the disease took its toll. Her parents would sit by her bed for hours at a time when she was at home.

At the hospital, my daughter stayed with her day and night. My wife would be with her as much as possible. When her high fevers could not be reduced by normal measures, she would be placed in a tent on an ice sheet (literally) below her. My daughter would put her hands around and below Lisa's body to soften the ice-cold treatment and sing to her in an attempt to comfort her. My wife would assist her.

"Gamma, hold me," she would say to my wife.

As long as her mother and "Gamma" had their whole arms under her in the tent (which was packed with ice) and croon softly to her, she endured the suffering uncomplainingly. I do not know how my wife and daughter were able to keep their hands from freezing in that icy tent for all those long hours. Where Penny got her strength was a mystery to me as she was pregnant through this whole ordeal.

Our days were long and troubled and our nights dreary and endless. Often I would hear my wife crying, unable to sleep for the anguish in her

heart. Trying to comfort her was futile. I endeavored to mask my grief from my family but not too well. When I was alone, however, I would give vent to my sorrow.

“O God in heaven,” I prayed so many times, “Please take my life and spare Lisa’s. I have lived many years, but she is just a little baby.” I meant every word. I would have gladly given my life for hers even as I had given my blood to be transfused into her body.

My daughter would say, “Why my Lisa? Why my little girl?”

What could I say? Words were so inadequate, so futile! Where were all the wise words of counseling that I was able to impart to others in my Ministry? Why could I not find some comforting phrases that would ease the pain in her heart? It was so simple to comfort others yet so difficult to comfort my family.

I remember Lisa’s last moments of her life. Her parents and my wife and I were around her bed in the hospital, noting every breath she was taking. I



looked at Lisa lying there with a plasma needle in her foot with her eyes closed gasping for breath. I called the nurse and told her to take the needle out of her foot. "She has suffered enough," I said.

Moments after the nurse removed the needle and left the room, Lisa smiled, squeezed her mother's finger, and took a last breath. She was gone! When that happened, her father, who up until then had kept his emotions under wrap, let out an anguished cry from the depths of his soul; and beating the bed with both fists in frustration repeated his little girl's name over and over. I looked at my daughter with great anxiety. I was fearful that this would harm the child she was carrying. Her eyes were dry and lifeless. Poor darling, she had shed so many tears that the shock of seeing her baby so still in death left her speechless. In a few minutes, they all left the room. As my wife was leaving, quietly weeping, she turned to see if I was leaving also.

"Not now, Mary," I said, "I want to be alone with my little girl for a while."

I shut the door and picked up my Lisa, holding her close and tenderly, so very tenderly.

"Go with God, my darling." I whispered, "Go and rest now where there is no more pain, no more suffering."

She felt so soft and cuddly, even in death. I kissed her and laid her down very gently. Then, weeping silently, I left the room.

I remember how beautiful she looked lying in the casket, clothed in the dress that "Gamma" had made for her. She looked just like an angel.

"Dad," my daughter whispered to me at the funeral parlor, "I put the song you composed for Lisa Marie in the coffin with her."

Suddenly, I knew why I had written in song, "Angels sent you down to me."

God had given her to me for a little while, and then sent His Angels to take her back.

A few months after Lisa had passed away, my daughter gave birth to a lovely little girl, whom she named Beth Kaylynn. At times, some well-meaning friends would say to Penny, "See, Beth has

replaced Lisa Marie." Whenever my wife would hear this, she would always reply, "Beth is not a replacement, she is an addition."

Over thirty years have gone by, and the memory of my Lisa is still sweetly fresh and dear to me. The old cliché, "Time is a great healer" is not altogether true. A very thin scab forms over the wound, alleviating the pain to a small degree. When I think of my little girl, my Lisa Marie, the scab falls off immediately and the hurt begins again. I can always see her whimsical smile, her eyes that shone like stars, and in my mind I can almost hear her say, "I love you, Papa."

After my granddaughter's death, my heart seemed pierced with a sword. I continued my service to God; and although He blessed me when I preached, I was unable to sing. Nothing would come out of my throat. Only after I saw Lisa Marie in vision, I could sing again.

I do not expect anyone to understand the trauma I went through at Lisa's death. Only those who have experienced the same heart-rending pain

can feel the same agony and pain. God alone was the one who softened the pain after several years, and I thank Him for this blessing. I shall always be grateful to the Lord for being with my wife and me through this terrible time. Without Him, we could not have survived. Lisa Marie was too precious; we will never forget her.

#### I SAW LISA MARIE AFTER SHE DIED

I preface this experience with important information. Many years ago, Sister Elizabeth Simpson's daughter, Bonnie Simpson Burch, was killed in a terrible car accident. She was riding in the car with her husband and small child when the accident occurred. Her husband and child survived, but she did not.

One Sunday morning while sitting in the meeting at the Bell Branch in California and listening to the preaching, I was carried away in the Spirit. I knew I was traveling heavenward as I could feel the air brushing my face gently.

Suddenly, I was on a plateau beautifully landscaped with verdant grass and flowers as far as my eyes could see. As I stood there admiring this beautiful scenery, I saw two girls coming towards me. They appeared to be about eighteen years of age. As they neared me, I recognized Bonnie but was puzzled about the other girl. I knew I had seen her somewhere but the place eluded me.

When they reached me, Bonnie and I greeted each other warmly; and then turning to the other young girl I hesitated, thinking, "Where have I seen this lovely girl?" As I thought this, she smiled at me with that beautiful, crooked Mona Lisa smile and said, "Where, Papa?" I could not believe it! It was my Lisa Marie! I held her close, so very close while gently stroking her hair and weeping with joy.

Suddenly, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared between the two girls, holding their hands in His. Christ did not speak; He just smiled, but what a smile! He said nothing, but His eyes and smile

spoke everything. I looked at Him and said, "Please Lord, take care of my Lisa and Bonnie." Jesus smiled again, and then all three disappeared. I then found myself in church again just as the preaching was ending.

After that wonderful experience, I could sing again. Oh yes, I could sing the praises of my Redeemer over and over. I have never forgotten those glorious moments of looking upon the face of Christ and the two girls. Christ was radiant; He was glorious! Sometimes I desire death that I may look on His dear face in person and hear His gentle voice say, "Welcome. Enter into the joy of my rest."

## IT'S A BOY!

My second grandchild was Barry, my son's first child. There was great rejoicing in our family, as well as in the Bologna family. He was such a sweet child. I just had to write a song about this little boy. Accordingly, when he was just a baby, I composed

a song with what I thought was a fitting title, "It's A Boy!"

"IT'S A BOY!"

Waitin' for the joy-bird, waitin' all agog,  
 Here he comes aflyin' with a cackle and a song.  
 This is what the stork said, when he brought this  
     gift of joy, "Howdy, folks, it's a boy!"  
 Come you Aunts and Uncles, and you Cousins too,  
 Come a celebratin' he's a he-man through and  
     through.

Hearts palpitin', as I shout it out with joy,  
 "It's a boy! It's a boy!"

One, two, three, four, who are we for?

Barry, Barry, Rah! Rah! Rah!

Bring on your baseballs and your choo-choo trains.

Bring on your barbells, for this muscle man.

Open up the windows. Open up the doors.

Shout it from the house tops, 'til your throats are  
     good and sore.

Pardon me, my kinfolk, as I boast a little more,

"It's a boy! It's a boy!"

Some have asked me why I did not write any songs for my other grandchildren: Beth, Scott, and Susan. I just couldn't, no matter how I tried. However, I love them as dearly as Barry and Lisa Marie.

#### GOD TAUGHT ME A GREAT LESSON

I want to preface this account by first informing the reader that a young teenager named Tony Vitto was very ill in the late 1930s. He had been in the hospital several times. At his last stay at the hospital, he prayed asking the Lord to give him enough strength to go home because he wanted to be baptized. The Lord answered his prayer; and as soon as he was taken home, he was baptized on the following Sunday morning. However, his illness attacked him again, wracking his body with suffering and loss of weight.

A few months after being married, I received a lesson from the Lord which at that time was a bitter



experience but was to be my guiding light throughout my ministerial life.

One of our wedding gifts was an electric alarm clock, which was as accurate as any clock I have ever owned. In those days, I always arose at 6:00 a.m. to go to work. On this particular day, the alarm rang as usual; and when I shut it, I noticed it was 6:00 a.m. I arose, prepared myself, and left for work. I walked to the corner to board a streetcar; and when I looked at a clock in a store, it registered 3:00 a.m. "How can that be?" I wondered. So I returned home thinking that I had three hours more to rest. When I entered my bedroom and looked at the clock, it was 3:00 a.m. I got in bed not giving it another thought.

I arose at the proper time and departed for work. However, I was troubled all day while working. Something was wrong somewhere. I prayed silently to get an answer to my troubled spirit but none came. When I reached home that evening, I felt directed to visit Brother Tony Vitto. I told my wife that I must visit that young brother.

I left home; and when I reached his house, I rang the bell. His mother opened the door; and upon seeing me, she burst into tears.

“What's wrong, sister?” I asked.

“This morning at exactly 3:00 a.m. my son was very ill, so my husband and I knelt in prayer asking the Lord to send us an Elder to anoint Tony.”

When she said that, I felt as though I had been slapped in the face. God had awakened me at 3:00 a.m., and I failed to pray asking why it had happened. It would have been a blessing if I had been spiritually alert and had asked the Lord for guidance. I am sure He would have directed me to go to the young brother's house and pray for him. I felt miserable. Regardless of my feelings, I prayed for the lad and then went home, promising myself that I would be more prayerful in a similar situation and pray for spiritual discernment. From that day on, I have not been caught spiritually “asleep at the wheel,” thanks be to God.

## LABORING AMONG THE SEED OF JOSEPH IN CANADA

The first few years in the Ministry, I labored quite extensively among the Seed of Joseph at the Muncey and Grand River Reservations in Canada, where I enjoyed many blessings. God has been good to me in my Ministry. He has given me wonderful liberty in preaching the Restored Gospel wherever He has led me. I have seen many healings. Some have been of a miraculous nature. I have also been the recipient of the glory of God as He overshadows me with His Holy Spirit. Following is one example of His love and protection.

One winter weekend, Brothers Clifford Burgess, Nick Pietrangelo, and I went to the Grand River Reservation to hold meetings with our Native American brothers and sisters (Seed of Joseph). The weather was below zero with snowdrifts approximately twelve feet high.

That Saturday evening, after visiting some of the members, we got in the car to go to our rooms

to retire. We had traveled a couple of miles when the engine stalled. I turned the key to start the car, but it would not turn over. The starter was stuck because of the freezing weather. How that could happen was a mystery to us. I turned the ignition key over and over, but the engine would not budge at all.

We knew we were in a terrible predicament. If the engine would not start, we would be without heat; and in that cold weather with the chill factor at about thirty below zero, we would freeze to death, even if we sat in the car. We looked at each other in perplexity not knowing what to do.

“Let's pray.” I said.

So we got out of the car and knelt on the frozen ground while the wind howled around us. We all prayed mightily to the Lord for help. When we arose from our knees, Brother Nick asked if any one of us had a house key. Brother Clifford and I wondered at this question. Nevertheless, we searched until Brother Burgess found an old, long key and handed it to Brother Nick.

With the key in his hand, Brother Nick opened the hood and then shorted the starter. Somehow, it broke loose, and when I turned the ignition, the engine started. Gratefully, we got in the car, had a thanksgiving prayer, and then drove off.

We had just witnessed a miracle! God had inspired our brother to attempt shorting the starter. What if we had not found an old-fashioned house key? "How did you happen to have this kind of key?" I asked. "I've had this key as a souvenir," Brother Burgess replied, "I had put it away some time ago. I don't know how it got in my pocket."

Needless to say, we were overjoyed that the Lord had spared us from freezing to death on that cold winter night so long ago.

#### AN INDIAN (NATIVE AMERICAN) SISTER RECEIVES HER SIGHT

Residing on the Muncey Reservation were an old blind woman and her nephew. She was about eighty years old when she heard the Restored

Gospel preached. After several months, she asked to be baptized. Her nephew protested, telling her that she was doing something wrong, as she was blind. She told him that no matter if her sight was gone, she was going to be baptized.

She was taken to the waters nearby and was baptized by Brother Matthew Miller. When she arose from the water, the scales fell from her eyes; and she could see. Her sight was restored! She came out of the water praising the Lord in a loud voice. What a marvelous miracle to witness. She lived to be over a hundred years of age and could thread a needle without eyeglasses. Praise be to the Lord!

A wonderful outpouring of the Spirit of God occurred one day at the Muncey Reservation, which reminded me of the clapping of hands at the "Waters of Mormon" (Mosiah 18:10-11). However, before relating this experience, I want to inform the reader that the Native Americans (Seed of Joseph) do not show their emotions as openly as the Gentiles do; they are more reserved, but they feel

very deeply within. In my ministerial endeavors among them at the Muncey and Grand River Reservations, I noticed something very unique. When they are blessed by the Spirit of God, tears will flow down their cheeks; and sounds as small joyful laughter, very quiet, will come from them.

One Sunday morning while I was preaching in Muncey, Canada, among the Seed of Joseph, the blessings and the glory of God came upon the entire congregation (about thirty persons). During the outpouring of the Lord's Spirit, I noticed that tears were running down the cheeks of everyone. Then suddenly, they began to slowly clap their hands together quietly while that peculiar, albeit unique, soft laughter came from them.

It was not applause. It was a beautiful, soft, and delayed sort of clapping, not quick and sharp as audiences do to entertainers. Immediately, the Waters of Mormon (Mosiah Ch. 18) came to my mind forcibly. The people did not applaud, as applause is understood, at the Waters of Mormon. They clapped their hands slowly and quietly as I

was witnessing my Native American brothers and sisters doing in front of me! I was so blessed that words become impossible to describe the glorious feeling of joy I was experiencing that morning. I shall never forget that wonderful day in Muncey. (Note: I have not witnessed that kind of event since that time.) However, I know that in the future, such blessings will be forthcoming often to the people of God.

#### IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, I SAW A BROTHER PUT AWAY HIS CRUTCHES

Many years ago, I went to Cleveland, Ohio, for several days. I visited with the brothers and sisters, conversing about the Gospel and the wonderful things that the Lord had done for us. I also spent a few hours with Brother August Perlione, who had fallen off a long ladder and had broken both hips two months prior to my visit. He was walking with the aid of crutches. The doctors told him that he would never be able to walk without them.



On Sunday morning, the Lord blessed us greatly. However, I noticed that Brother Perlione was not in attendance. In the afternoon service, much to my pleasant surprise, he walked in the Church. Prior to administering the Lord's Supper, he requested to be anointed. Since I was a guest minister, I was asked to pray for him.

I anointed him with the blessed oil and laid hands on him, as did the other ministers. I prayed that God would heal him or at least improve his state of being. After I finished praying and we took our hands off his head, he arose, shook hands with us; and then to the amazement of everyone, he laid his crutches aside and helped to administer the Lord's Supper. From the day he was healed until he died several years ago, he walked without any artificial assistance. All I can say is "Praise the Lord." From the healing to his death there was a span of about forty years without pain or the aid of crutches.

## YOUNG MEN'S ORGANIZATION IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

One of my early inspirations in the Church was to get many young men together and organize a class, which we called "The Young Men's Organization." In this class, we enjoyed the blessings of the Lord to the uttermost. We studied the Bible, but the Book of Mormon was our main textbook. I have always taken pride in having been the Teacher of this class. Almost every young man of this organization eventually was ordained as a Teacher or an Elder. Some were ordained as Evangelists and Apostles. I must add that of the manifold blessings which the Lord gave to this class, one is imprinted in my mind and heart never to be forgotten.

One of the assignments, which I gave weekly to this class, was to find certain portions of Scripture in the Book of Mormon. One evening, I asked them to find the following verse: "And little children also have eternal life." I also suggested that they were not to use a concordance in searching for this verse.

My thought was that as they searched, they would also learn more of its contents.

The following week when we assembled, I asked if anyone had found the verse. Everyone said that he had failed to do so except one brother (Concetto Alexander), who shyly raised his hand and said, "I found the verse; but before I tell you where it is, I must relate an experience that I had." He went on to say, "I prayed and searched every day to find this passage of Scripture, but to no avail. Yesterday (Wednesday), I fasted all day, asking the Lord to help me find this verse, for I thought it would be a shame to go to the class empty-handed.

"Last night after retiring, I had a dream in which I was in the front room of my house searching the Book of Mormon for that particular verse. I was upset because I could not find it. Suddenly, a man clothed in white appeared before me and asked what I was looking for. I replied that I was searching for the verse that Brother Jim had given us as an assignment, but I could not find it. The

man smiled and said, 'You will find it in Mosiah, the fifteenth chapter, and the twenty-fifth verse.' Then he disappeared.

"I awoke suddenly, amazed at my dream; I aroused my wife, saying, Rose, Rose, awake. She awoke somewhat frightened and asked me what was wrong. I told her about the dream and asked her to get up with me to see if what the man told me was true. We went to the front room and opened the Book of Mormon to Mosiah 15:25. Lo and behold, there it was, the verse I had been searching for all week."

When Brother Alexander related the experience, the blessings of the Lord came down in showers. How wonderful God is! For one verse, He condescended to give that young brother this exceptional experience.

## SOME MISSIONARY ENDEAVORS

My wife and I began to hold meetings in Delano, California, in the home of Brother Joseph

Costarella. Often, Brother Anthony Brutz came with us. For about two years, we had services in that small community. Sometimes there were a few visitors in attendance. At other times, only the few members of the Church were present, but the Lord blessed us each time we went to Delano.

I believe we would have been successful if calamity had not struck. Brother Costarella's wife contracted cancer, and in a few months she passed away. Her death put a great damper on the work. Sadly, it estranged her entire family.

Shortly after her death, Brother Costarella married again; and it seemed that all interest waned in the hearts of the people in Delano. If Sister Costarella had lived, I believe we would have had a branch of the Church in that city. She was kind, generous to a fault, and very hospitable. We missed her very much.

Some of my missionary endeavors have been together with Brother Querino Bologna in Canada. I also have been on missionary work in Toronto, Canada, with Brother Warren Nellis.

I also did missionary work in North Canada, where relatives of some members in Windsor lived. In the wintertime, food had to be parachuted down because of the heavy snowfalls. The people were farmers, who were warm and kind.

I remember that in one of the trips in that vicinity, Brother Clifford Burgess came with me. Upon reaching our destination, we were welcomed warmly by the people. We stayed in one of their homes on Saturday evening. On Sunday morning when we went to the place of meeting, we found the house so full of people that many had to stand outside on the porch which encircled the house; looking and listening through the doors and windows. It was unbelievable!

Later Brother Burgess told me that he counted more than seventy people in attendance. The people were very attentive to the preaching of the Restored Gospel. One couple told me that if I would care to go there and be their minister, they would build a house for my family and me and

also support me. I never accepted that wonderful offer.

## RESTORATION, RESTORATION

One weekend, the late Brother William H. Cadman and I stayed in the home of a wonderful woman, who treated us with kindness and sincerity. On Sunday morning, she excused herself for not coming to the meeting, as she was not well. We held a meeting at a home approximately one mile from her house.

When we returned to this woman's home, she said, "You must have had a wonderful service."

We asked why she said this.

"I was on the swing outside," she replied, "when suddenly I heard, as clear as could be, a voice coming across the fields saying, Restoration, Restoration."

What a wonderful experience the Lord had given this woman. To this day, I still wonder what would have been in store for me (or any other

minister) had I accepted that generous offer to move in that area.

### THE NEW SAINTS HYMNAL

When I met the Church, I noticed that there was no music to the words in the hymnals. I was told that this was true in the entire Church. After I was ordained as an Elder, I went to the General Church Conference and suggested to the Elders assembled that we should compile our own hymnal with music. The Elders consented to this and elected Brother Clifford Burgess, Sister Sadie Cadman, and me to do this work. Since Sister Cadman was confined to a wheelchair and lived too far to meet with us, she contributed selections and advice. Brother Burgess and I worked on the compilation of a hymnal with music. We labored two-and one-half years, and many times far into the early morning hours to complete the job assigned to us. Since Brother Burgess lived in Windsor, Canada, and I lived in Detroit, we would



alternate visits to work on the new hymnal. One week he would come to Detroit, and the next week I would go to Windsor.

We made many visits to the Rodeheaver Hall-Mack Publishing Company located in Winona, Indiana, to meet with Mr. B. D. Ackley, the Music Director, who wrote the music to many of our lyrics. I want to insert something special at this time. I had always heard that some people had "absolute musical pitch" (mistakenly called "perfect pitch"). I had never witnessed this phenomenon.

As we started to work with Mr. Ackley, he took out some blank music sheets and laid them on the table in front of him. Then he asked me to hum a few bars of the hymn to which we wanted music set. I would hum a few bars, and then he would stop me. With his pen he would write the notes on the blank musical staff. We continued like this until I had hummed an entire verse and chorus of the hymn. He would then go to the piano and play it exactly as I had hummed it. Brother Burgess and I

sat there in amazement. We were face-to-face with a musical genius, a man with "absolute pitch." It was an exciting experience to work with this man.

Sometimes, my wife and Brother Burgess' wife went with us, and at times other brothers would keep us company. One weekend, the late Brother Nick Pietrangelo went with us. On Saturday, after we had worked with Mr. Ackley for several hours, he invited us to go in the basement of the hotel where we were staying and play a couple of games of bowling. He called it "duck pin" bowling.

Brothers Clifford, Nick, and I were astounded. We told Mr. Ackley that we would let him know after dinner. After he left, we wondered what to tell him. We thought that if some of the members in Detroit would hear, we would be criticized and judged that we went bowling instead of working on the hymnal. Notwithstanding our discomfiture, we managed to get out of that situation. Somehow or other, Mr. Ackley understood and graciously withdrew his invitation to go "duck pin" bowling.

Finally, in 1942 we had our first hymnal with music printed. It was entitled *The Saints' Hymnal*. I believe we have one of the finest hymnals in the world.

After many years, Brother Burgess and I compiled another hymnal entitled *The Saints Favorites*. Many brothers and sisters contributed lyrics to which either Sister Mabel Bickerton or I composed the music. Brother Burgess, other members, and I contributed hymns that we composed. This is also a very fine hymnal, which the saints are enjoying.

#### MY WIFE AND CHILDREN; GOD'S GIFT TO ME

My wife and children have always been a great help to me in my ministerial duties. True to her experience to stand by me, my wife has supported me spiritually all the way. I cannot write enough about her, for she has stood by my side with her love and with her fasting and prayers. No sacrifice has ever been too great for her to make when it involved

my Ministry. When my two children married and had families of their own, my wife agreed to leave the children and go with me as I traveled from place to place in the service of the Lord and His Church. I could never have been as successful in my Church endeavors without her. I know that God will richly reward her for her efforts in my behalf and her support in my Ministry.

#### AN EXCEPTIONAL VISION HAD BY MY WIFE

I shall preface my experience with a short history of my family to show how mysteriously God works to bring about His plans.

I was born of Catholic parents. My mother's uncle was a Monsignor in the Catholic Church. He was a speaker of renown and highly respected by everyone. I too was a devout Catholic. During my school years in Italy, I retained high grades in all my classes. To my great joy, I was greatly honored one year by the city fathers and given an award for being one of the top students in my school. What a

wonderful memory that is. I still remember how elated I was at seeing the large number of people who came to this event, and how they cheered and applauded when my name was called to receive the coveted award. Even now, when I remember, I feel the same thrill and joy I felt that day.

My mother was a wonderful person who was loved and respected by everyone who had come in contact with her. She was a very sympathetic woman, always helping those who were ill, whether they had infectious diseases or not. She also administered medicinal injections to those who needed them because she was a licensed midwife. Her father had instructed the doctors who used my mother to assist them that his daughter was not to be rewarded with money or goods for her help as they did not need any money and that any help should always be given gratis. My mother agreed to this gladly. Often her mother would scold her, fearing that she would become infected with the diseases of the sick persons. But my mother ignored this admonition and continued

to help the sick whenever she could. Besides aiding the sick, she also took chicken soup and other food to the sick and the poor.

When I was a child, my father came to the United States and found work at the Ford Motor Company. He wanted to send for his family; but because he was not a citizen, he was prohibited from doing so. He made many attempts to get his citizenship papers but always failed. He wrote to us in Italy, very discouraged, telling us that he was going to make another attempt to get his papers.

My father could not read or write in the English language. Nevertheless, with some help he managed to learn a little, very little. Every time he went to court and was questioned regarding his reading he failed, leaving him dejected and discouraged. However, being a determined man, he prayed to the Lord to help him to read so that he could send for his family whom he loved so dearly.

After many months of study, and thinking he was reading, he went to the court again. When he stood before the examiner and was asked to read a

few passages, he did so without interruption or fear. Surprised, the examiner asked him how had he learned to read so well when before he could barely make out a word. To his great joy, he was given his citizenship.

He left the court elated that he could read; but when he looked up at the street sign, he found it impossible to read. He could not read at all! He then understood that God had performed this miracle for him.

After many months had passed, we received a letter from him filled with joyful news that he obtained his citizenship papers miraculously! All the family was excited at the prospect of going to America except me. I did not want to leave Italy because I was looking forward to becoming a school teacher, but this never came to fruition as we soon left for America. On the appointed day amid tearfully bidding goodbye to friends and relatives, we embarked on our journey to meet my father.

I still remember standing in one corner of the ship, crying my heart out because of leaving my native land of birth.

Upon our arrival at Ellis Island in New York, and while going through the gate for inspection, we were asked, "Where is your mother?" Surprised, we pointed to my mother, but the inspector shook his head indicating that in my mother's passport the surname was written "Biondo" instead of "Randazzo." He also, by hand motions, indicated that he could not understand us. I stepped forward and asked them in Italian to get someone who understood my language. Immediately, a person was found who spoke Italian; and upon questioning why my mother had a different surname on her passport, I replied, "In Italy, people of wealth and influence demand that their daughters retain their maiden name rather than their married one. For that reason, the surname on my mother's passport states 'Biondo' rather than 'Randazzo'." When I finished explaining this apparent mystery,



everyone was very apologetic; and without further ado we were permitted to enter the United States.

Words cannot express the joy we felt at seeing my father again. We all felt such happiness when he told us of how God had intervened in his behalf. If the Lord had not come to my father's aid, we would not be in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Shortly after coming to the United States, my family was introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ by Sister Rose Impastato. Eventually, my parents, my sister Virginia, and my brother Mark were baptized. I refrained from baptism because I was still a very devout Catholic and attended mass every Sunday morning. My family would come home for lunch after the Sunday morning service and then return for the afternoon meeting.

After every Sunday mass, I would go home and prepare luncheon for them. One Sunday as I was preparing the food, I heard footsteps descending in the eating area. I thought nothing about it, thinking it was my family returning from the meeting, but to my surprise no one was in the house.

A week later, I heard the footsteps again in the eating area. This time I was petrified, thinking that someone was attempting to scare me, but later I heard my family's voices much to my relief. Then and there I decided never to stay home alone any more. The following Sunday, I went to Church with my family. While Brother Thurman S. Furnier was preaching, my heart began to beat very strongly. I had heard that in The Church of Jesus Christ when the heart begins to beat during the service, it is the Lord who is knocking at the door of your heart. I did not tell anyone what had happened to me in Church.

The next Sunday, I had a decision to make. If I stay home and hear those footsteps again, fear will assail me. If I go to Church, I do not know if I would be able to survive the beating of my heart. So, I decided to go to Church with my family. After the meeting was opened, Brother Furnier began to preach. Again, my heart began to beat. Suddenly, I found myself on my feet asking for baptism. When I sat down I thought, "What have I done?"

Nevertheless, I went through with my baptism. That day, a total of six people asked to be baptized.

After I was baptized, I was full of indescribable joy and happiness. That same week at one of the evening services, someone read a passage of Scripture wherein it states, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). My body shook at the reading of this Scripture. A conversation ensued with the theme that we must endure to the end to be saved. I was deeply concerned. What can I do to be saved? Who is going to help me?

I prayed sincerely about the matter. One night while I was in the basement of our home, I began to hear thunder rolling and lightning flashing. Suddenly, I was outside in midair. Looking down I saw great destruction; homes were burning and people were screaming and dying everywhere. I was attempting to get far away from the fire and destruction but could not. Mysteriously, I felt two

hands hold me by the shoulders. I looked up into one of the most beautiful and majestic faces I have ever seen, and I cried out, "The Heavenly Father has come to save me." Immediately, I found myself in bed, still feeling the Spirit and glory of God and His hands upon my shoulders. For a long time, I could not tell this experience to anyone lest I would lose that wonderful feeling of glory I had received. As long as I live, I shall never forget that glorious day when I beheld the face of the Lord.

#### ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE HAD BY MY WIFE

One Sunday morning while sitting in a Church meeting and singing that beautiful hymn, "Shall I Empty-Handed Be," I was carried away in the Spirit to a beautiful place. I found myself in a circle of people. The circumference of the circle seemed endless. I saw God sitting on His throne and Jesus Christ standing on His right side.

Suddenly, a heavenly voice directed to God, said, "Peter, son of Jonas." Peter would then step out of the circle and face God and Jesus Christ. The voice continued, "He served God and Christ with all his heart, and finally he gladly went to his death, asking to be crucified upside down so he could look at His Lord and Master." Christ would nod His head in approval of the voice's testimony about Peter. After God's blessing, Peter was transported into heaven. Then Paul's name was called, and he stepped forward facing God's throne. The heavenly voice said, "He persecuted the saints; but after Christ called him, he served God and the Church faithfully and gave his life for Christ by being beheaded." God and Jesus would again nod their heads in approval, and Paul was transported into heaven. When Stephen's name was called, he came forward and the voice said, "He was a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and His Church; and for that he was stoned to death." Jesus would nod His head, and Stephen was transported into heaven. This continued with the voice calling

out the names of the faithful: many who had died eaten by wild beasts and in various atrocious manners, and those who had died serving God with all their heart. The voice continued testifying to the Father about each person that reached God's throne.

As I heard these testimonies, I began to think, "I have done nothing worthy enough to have Jesus witness for me. I have done no great works like these people." I finally reached the throne of God wondering what Christ would say about me. I looked at the face of Jesus who smiled at me; and then turning to the Father, He said, "Father, she has loved me." As Christ said these words, I found myself back in Church. Words cannot express the joy of receiving such a marvelous experience. For this great blessing, I thank and praise the Lord forever and ever.

This experience was so great and beautiful; I kept it to myself for fear I would lose the glorious feeling within me. The next day I went to work; and while sitting across from one of my coworkers,

she said, "Mary, I see the rays of the sun shining upon you, and we do not have any sunlight in this room; for we have no windows, doors, or skylight." I replied, "I received a wonderful experience yesterday in Church." I then told her what I had received. She said, "I believe you, for there is a bright glow all around you as bright as the sun."

When I heard this, I glorified God in my heart. What a wonderful God we serve! He not only blessed me but also blessed the woman working for me who does not know a thing about our Church. In my heart I cried out, "I praise Thee, my God for Your loving-kindness."

That evening, I told my husband and children the marvelous thing that happened to me; and again, I felt the same glorious blessing I had received in Church. For this blessing I thank the Lord forever and ever. It is marvelous how God reveals Himself from time to time to His children and grants us communion with Him daily.

## MY YEARS AS PRESIDING ELDER OF BRANCH #4 IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Shortly after being ordained an Evangelist (1936), I was elected as Presiding Officer at the North Side Mission and later as Presiding Elder when it was organized as Branch #4, in Detroit, Michigan. Not long afterwards (at twenty-four years old), my wife was ordained a Deaconess. During the eleven years that I presided there, I witnessed the blessings, power, and the glory of God manifested many times. Following are a few of the marvelous blessings bestowed upon us.

Sister Louise Lombardo, who introduced the Church to my family, had a small son who at the age of four years contracted a serious illness. He had to be watched day and night by his parents, especially his mother. After several years of praying, the boy was still sick. I asked my branch to fast and pray every Saturday morning for the healing of this boy. We fasted about two years but saw no improvement. One Saturday, Sister Lombardo related a dream she had the previous



night. She saw herself in prison; and while behind bars, the guard came up to her and said that she would be in prison for eleven years and then she would be liberated. When she told this dream, God gave me the interpretation.

I told everyone present that from the time the little boy became sick at four years of age, Sister Lombardo has been truly in a prison of anguish and pain for her child; but in eleven years this burden would be lifted. That would make him fifteen years old. In a few months from the time she related the dream, the child reached his fifteenth birthday and on that day he died. Her dream was fulfilled.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A GUIDING LIGHT

One evening many years ago, my wife, Mary; my two small children, Leonard James, and Priscilla; and I were on our way to the Church meeting at Branch #4 over which I was Presiding

Elder. The distance from our home to the meeting place was approximately fourteen miles. We had traveled more than half way when I turned to my wife saying, "Mary, I don't know why, but I have a strong feeling to go and pay Sister Marietta Ruzzi a visit. I know this is a meeting night; nonetheless, this sudden feeling of urgency has come upon me."

Without hesitation, she replied, " If that's what you want to do, then obey your feeling. I'm sure that the brothers and sisters will understand why we'll be a little late."

At her response, I quickly turned the car towards Sister Ruzzi's home. When we arrived there, we were welcomed warmly by Dominic and Marianne, who told us that Sister Marietta was feeling very ill. When they led us into her bedroom, Sister Marietta's face lit up with a beautiful radiance. Her first words were, "Thank God, you are here, Brother Jim. I have been feeling

very sick, and I prayed that the Lord would send an Elder to my home." In a soft voice, she told us of an experience she had received just minutes earlier.

"A few minutes ago in a vision, I saw your family and you driving to your meeting place. Suddenly, I saw a beautiful, glorious light appear in front of your car and began to lead you. You followed the light wherever it led you until it stopped in front of my house. Then, all of you followed the light into my bedroom. My vision then ended. I know that the Lord brought you here to anoint me and pray for me."

When we heard that experience, a wonderful feeling of joy fell upon all of us. I immediately took the vial of blessed oil from my pocket, asking all present to pray prior to anointing our sister. Then, I arose from my knees, anointed her with the blessed oil, laid my hands upon her head, and

prayed mightily to God in the name of Jesus Christ to heal Sister Marietta.

When I finished praying, she let out a soft cry, and said, "Brother Jim, I feel much better." She wanted us to stay and visit with her, but she understood that we were on our way to the meeting. Strange as it seems, we arrived at the meeting just a few minutes late. According to that which had taken place, we should have been almost an hour late. The Lord works mighty wonders in His mysterious ways.

## A MIRACULOUS HEALING

A wonderful sister in Branch #4 was ill with an unusual affliction. (I will withhold her name for privacy.) She would have seizures periodically. They were of a peculiar nature. Rather than shake, she would become stiff as a board. Each time this happened and the Elders would pray for her, she

would slowly return to her normal self. These attacks began to grow frequently. One Sunday, she invited my family and a few others for dinner. While we were conversing in her living room, someone said that this sister was having one of those attacks in the basement of her house.

Along with others, I started for the stairs to the basement. As I took the first step down, something strange happened to me. A power which I had only sensed a few times came over me, filling my entire body. This power gave me an assurance as that which came upon Peter and John at the gate Beautiful. As I came close to her, I saw that she had become stiff and unmoving. When I reached her, I laid my hands upon her head and commanded the affliction to depart from her in the name of Jesus Christ. As soon as I said these words, she let out a groan; and we all heard the basement door, which led outside, open and close with a terrible bang. The sister immediately came out of the attack, feeling a strength she had never felt in her life. After that, she never had another attack. For this, I

praise the Lord for His gracious mercy and healing. None who witnessed the power of God would ever forget that experience.

### ANOTHER MIRACULOUS HEALING

Connie Fera, a young girl of fourteen years, was very afflicted with a rare malady that caused her to faint when she was attacked by an unendurable pain in her head. Several doctors had attempted to find the cause of her illness, but to no avail. Finally, the family was told that if her illness continued, death could result. Although she received some relief whenever we anointed her and prayed for her, the affliction would attack her periodically. One day I asked the branch to fast and pray for her the following Saturday.

On the night before the appointed fast, I had a dream in which I saw our members assembled in Church and praying for Connie. She was not in the meeting, and I wondered if the illness forced her to stay in bed. After some time had elapsed, she

appeared in Church. As the service progressed, I saw the pain strike her, causing her to faint. In the dream, my brother ministers went to her seat, anointed her with blessed oil, laid hands upon her, and prayed mightily to God. Within a minute, she recovered from her faint, and cried out, "I am healed." I awoke, praying that the dream would become a reality on the morrow.

The next day, my family and I went to the fast and prayer service where I found the small membership already assembled, but Connie was not there. Notwithstanding her absence, we began to pray. Time passed but still she did not appear. I was troubled. I believed that God had given me that dream on Friday night. Was it just a dream? Suddenly, the door opened, and Connie and her mother walked into the church, much to my joy; at least part of my dream was fulfilled.

After a few prayers, however, I saw Connie hold her head and go into a faint. Before we prayed for her, I related my dream to the congregation; and told them that half of it had

come to pass. "Let's pray that the other half will be fulfilled." I took the bottle of blessed oil and with the other ministers walked to her seat. We prayed mightily first, and then I poured the blessed oil upon her head. I prayed to the Lord with all my heart and all the faith I could muster to heal the young girl. I had hardly finished praying when she cried out, "I have no more pain. I am healed."

Words cannot express the joy we all felt. The saints cried aloud in praises to God. We could not stop praising the Lord. We kept on offering thanksgiving prayers for quite a while before I closed the meeting.

Connie Fera was healed completely, and her illness never returned, Praise the Lord. A few years later, she was baptized and eventually married the late Brother Dominic Moraco. He passed to his reward as an Evangelist of The Church of Jesus Christ. I was, and still am honored to have joined them in holy wedlock.



## RADIO PROGRAM IN PORT HURON, MICHIGAN, AND IN SARNIA, CANADA

In the middle 1940s, I was in charge of a radio program in Port Huron, Michigan, and then in Sarnia, Canada. Following is a brief history regarding the radio program on Station CHOK, known as *The Gospel Hour*. Brother Mark Randy started this work in Port Huron and eventually turned it over to me. For approximately two years, I broadcasted on this station with the help of many of the young people from the United States and Canada. Also, many Elders assisted in this work. My family, along with one or two carloads of young brothers and sisters, would travel from Detroit to Sarnia (about sixty miles) every Sunday morning to broadcast on Station CHOK. We enjoyed every minute of our endeavors. We never solicited money over the air, but Brother Mark told me that he had received donations from the listeners, totaling hundreds of dollars. Eventually, we pre-recorded our broadcast and mailed the tapes to the station, but it was not the same as

broadcasting in person. All in all, the radio program was a success. The Lord blessed us with about thirty baptisms as the result of our preaching and singing on Station CHOK.

### CONVERSION OF SISTER VELDA BARKLEY

In early 1940, meetings were held in the home of Brother and Sister Van Bree (Charles and Ann) in Mt. Brydges, Ontario, Canada. Sister Ann was a woman of remarkable qualities. She was very hospitable, considering the fact that her family consisted of nine or ten children. Despite that, she always had a table set with good food for the brothers and sisters after each meeting. Her outstanding attribute was being a spiritual person. Often, many visitors came to the meetings at her invitation.

One day a woman attended the meeting by the name of Velda Barkley. That day the Lord blessed me with His Holy Spirit, giving me much liberty in speaking. During the course of my sermon, I gave a

short account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. After the service was over, Mrs. Barkley shook my hand and said, "I enjoyed your preaching very much; but why did you have to bring in the Book of Mormon in your sermon?"

I gave her a brief history of the Book of Mormon; but seeing the skepticism on her face, I suggested that she ask the Lord to either confirm or deny my words.

Two weeks later I returned to the Van Bree home for another meeting; when to my great surprise, Mrs. Barkley met me at the door with a hearty handshake and a wonderful smile on her face. "I want to be baptized, Brother Jim," were her first words.

Taken by surprise, I asked, "How did you arrive at this decision?"

Excitedly, she replied, "Come inside and I'll relate it to all of you." When she had everyone's attention, she told the following experience.

"I had a dream in which I was in a large dining room. I was standing in one corner of the room. In

the center was a long dining table with many of the members of this Church sitting around it. Jesus Christ was sitting at the head of the table, and next to Him was an empty chair. As I looked at Jesus, He spoke to me saying, "Velda, come sit by me, and be not afraid. These are my people."

While relating this wonderful dream, tears of joy kept running down her cheeks. We all wept as she related her dream. When she finished relating her dream, she asked to be baptized. This was attended to with joy and confirmed in the afternoon. The Spirit of God was in the baptism and also when the ministers laid hands upon her head for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

Sister Velda's husband was completely set against the Church and made life miserable for her. So great was the abuse that one day she decided to leave him. She packed her bags while he was away from home and was ready to leave the house when Brother Mark Randy knocked on her door. Surprised to see him, she asked the reason for his

visit. "The Lord moved on me to visit you," he replied.

She then told him that she was leaving her husband because of his abuse. Even after a long conversation in which he attempted to convince her not to leave her husband, she was still adamant about her decision. Finally, he said, "Only cowards run from a battle."

After a short while, he prayed with her and left.

When her husband returned home, he found her home, to his great astonishment.

"I thought you were going to leave me," he said.

"Brother Mark told me that I shouldn't leave you; that only cowards run from a battle."

"Mark told you that?" he asked, unable to say more.

"Yes, that's what my minister told me," she replied.

Miraculously, after that incident her husband started to visit the Church and not long afterwards asked to be baptized. A wonderful change came

over him. He became as humble as a dove. He could not do enough for his wife or the Church. It is marvelous what the Lord can do? God be praised! No miracle is greater than the change in one's heart. What great things God can do! Nothing is too hard for Him.

#### ENJOYABLE MISSIONARY WORK IN FARWELL, MICHIGAN

While I was Presiding Elder at Branch #4 in Detroit, Michigan, Brother Mark Randy became acquainted with Warren Nellis and Earl Ewing, two Apostles of the Church of Christ (Feddingtonites). Warren Nellis invited Mark to go to Farwell, Michigan, where he lived, to hold meetings with his group. Brother Mark asked me to go with him, which I readily accepted.

Prior to going to Farwell, we prayed to God to direct us on what to speak to these people, as they were strict adherents of the "Restored Gospel." Brother Mark had a beautiful experience in the

form of a dream in which a man appeared to him; and seeing how pensive Mark was, asked why he seemed so disturbed. Brother Mark proceeded to answer this person's question by saying, "Brother Jim and I are going to Farwell, but we really do not know what to preach to these people as they are acquainted with the Restored Gospel and the Book of Mormon." The man smiled at Brother Mark and said, "Preach about the love of God."

When Brother Mark told me this experience, I was overjoyed and told him, "That's what we will preach." Finally, the day arrived to depart for Farwell. We had asked the saints to pray that the Lord would be with us in this missionary endeavor. When we arrived at Farwell, Mr. and Mrs. Nellis greeted us warmly and provided a delicious dinner for us. Afterwards, people began to come in and shake our hands warmly. Approximately thirty-five persons came to hear us preach. After everyone was seated, Mr. Nellis introduced us formally and incited us to proceed with the meeting.

We followed the advice of the person who had appeared to Brother Mark in his dream. When I began to preach, I discerned a very cold atmosphere in the room. As I continued to preach, the Spirit of the Lord fell upon all of us; and a joyful, comforting warmth filled every person who was present. When I finished speaking, Brother Mark followed with the same theme, "The love of God", as the Holy Spirit bore evidence to what was said.

When the meeting was turned over to testimony, Mrs. Nellis arose and said that when she and others heard that we (Mark and I) were coming to preach to them, they were fearful that we would "crack the whip"(her words) on them as others had done. When we began to preach about "the love of God," all fear left them and a joy unspeakable filled their souls. Now, I knew why I felt a "coldness" when I began preaching. Many at that meeting bore wonderful testimonies, thanking God for sending us to them. It was truly a wonderful service.



From that time on, we began to visit Farwell periodically. Brother Mark eventually busied himself with other missionary endeavors, and the work in Farwell was left in my charge, under the jurisdiction of Branch #4.

My wife and I with our two small children held meetings in Farwell in the summer and winter. In winter with weather at zero or below, we slept in Brother and Sister Geib's attic, where the only heat came through a pipe from the wood stove below. In order to keep warm, we sometimes slept fully clothed with our children between us.

Nevertheless, the result of the work in Farwell was truly blessed of the Lord. About thirty persons were baptized, including Warren Nellis and Earl Ewing, the two Apostles of the Feddingite group. At this point, I want to say that I have never felt any greater liberty in preaching the Restored Gospel than at Farwell, Michigan.

The brothers and sisters of Farwell expressed their love for us in many ways. Not only did they accommodate the saints that went with us with

shelter and food; but also after every Sunday service, they prepared a most beautiful dinner for everybody, which had been contributed by all the members, a "pot luck" type of hospitality. The food was of different kinds, accompanied by delicious desserts. The love of God in the midst of these members was indescribable.

Among the many spiritual blessings received at Farwell, one experience stands out remarkably clear. Mrs. Elizabeth Collins (about eighty years old), a member of one of the Restored Gospel groups, began attending our meetings. She bore witness that she felt a great amount of the Spirit of God in our meetings and very much love in our people. However, she was disturbed with me because she could not partake of the Lord's Supper with us. I attempted many times to explain why we had "closed Communion" and that only baptized members could participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. She would always tell me, "But I have been baptized since I was fourteen years old." She would also tell me that she had been blessed of

God with glorious experiences, such as seeing some of the Prophets of old, Angels of heaven, and many other wonderful experiences.

Seeing that I could neither prevail with her nor convince her regardless of my arguments, I told her many times to ask the Lord for His answer. The following Sunday she approached me; and patting my cheek with her fragile hand, she said, "Brother Jimmy, I want to be baptized." I was astounded, needless to say, and asked her what had made her decide to be baptized in our Church.

She replied, "I took your advice to ask God for an answer to my dilemma. While I lay in bed I prayed, as I am too weak to kneel; Lord, I said, I want to partake of the Lord's Supper with Brother Jimmy's group, but he says that I must be baptized in his Church. I have been baptized since I was fourteen years old and have served You faithfully. Why must I be baptized again? Immediately, as I asked this question, I heard an audible voice calling my name loudly and saying, 'Put on the whole armor of God'."

Looking at me with tears running down her cheeks, she said, "Something has been missing in me all of these years. I want to put on the whole armor of God. Please baptize me." I embraced this dear old woman and rejoiced with all those present that the Lord heard not only her prayers but ours as well. One of the brothers (I believe it was Brother Peter Capone) baptized Sister Collins; and after we had confirmed her, we gave her Communion. Words cannot express the joy we all felt as we shared the Lord's Supper with this old sister and saw the tears of happiness roll down from her cheeks. Shortly afterwards, she passed on to her heavenly reward.

#### A STUBBORN WILL BROKEN

In Farwell, a former Texas Ranger was baptized. His surname was Geib. (I do not recall his first name.) His baptism occurred many months after his wife joined the Church. He was a slim, wiry person with a singular charm about him and a

remarkable sense of humor. He loved everything about the Church: the people, its Faith and Doctrine, and all of the Ordinances. However, he did not approve of male members greeting each other with a kiss on the cheek. He did not mind a hug, but a kiss was "off limits." In his peculiar style of humor, he once told me, "It's bad enough to be kissed by my wife, but never by a man."

I was now in a quandary. I did not know what this "Ranger" would do if a brother unwittingly kissed him. Would he be offended or would he, God forbid, strike him. I cautioned every brother who came with me to "hug but not kiss" Brother Geib. Accordingly, they took my advice.

One Sunday after we had celebrated the Lord's Supper, we commenced the Feet Washing service. Whether it was by coincidence or design, Brother Geib came to sit before me to have his feet washed.

Since we have a custom of a hug and a kiss on the cheek after both feet are washed, I was suddenly thrown into the dilemma of whether I

should just embrace him or kiss him on the cheek after I washed his feet.

Trusting in God, I knelt before him and washed his feet. When we arose, I clasped his hand and was ready to just hug him when from his mouth came a groan as a man in great pain. Throwing his arms around me, he kissed me on both cheeks as tears of joy rolled down his cheeks mixed with intermittent laughter. God had broken his stubborn will! No one had ever seen a happier man. After that incident, Brother Geib greeted every brother with a kiss on each cheek. The Lord has a beautiful way to change a person's attitude.

I remember that many brothers and sisters visited Farwell with me. Among the ministers were Brothers Felix Buccellato, John Dulisse, Gorie Ciaravino, Anthony Brutz, Silverio Criscuolo, Peter Capone, Dominic Moraco, and others. After more than two years of working in Farwell, the Spirit of God directed my family and me to move to California.

## I BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH MR. HENRY FORD

Many years prior to leaving for California, I worked at the Ford Motor Company, specifically in Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan. I labored in the experimental paint division with three other men. My job consisted of painting models of cars two years before they appeared on the market. I first painted the clay models, then the wooden models, and then the hand made steel models.

One day I was summoned to the manager's office and was informed that Mr. Henry Ford had a seventy-foot boat built that he intended to launch on his man-made river called "The Swanee River" in Dearborn. The boat was to run by a steam engine. He also said that Mr. Ford wanted the best man possible to paint his boat inside and outside. And smiling at me he said, "I picked you to do this job." I did not know what to say; I was flattered to be chosen to do that work.

The boat was brought into a large building, and I began to work on the assignment given to me.

One day as I was working on the boat, I felt a soft touch on my shoulder. I turned and there was Mr. Ford. In a soft voice he asked for my name; and when I had done so, he said, "Jim, when I come to see how my boat is coming along, I want you to stop working as I may have some questions to ask."

Mr. Ford came to see his boat almost daily; and when he was there, I would stop working as he had requested. As time went by, he became very friendly with me to the extent that we began to converse about religion. I wasted no time telling him that I was a non-paid minister and all about The Church of Jesus Christ. These conversations went on for several months.

It was one year before I finished the project. He was very pleased with the finished product. Unfortunately, before the launching day arrived, he died. I felt very sad about his demise, as we seemed to have become friends. God knows the future of every person regardless of his or her position in life.



I WAS ASKED TO SING ON  
"THE FIRESTONE HOUR"

One day while painting Mr. Ford's boat, a man approached me who introduced himself as Mr. Bacon, Mr. Ford's personal artist. He said that he heard I was an erstwhile operatic baritone, and would I consent to sing carols during the Christmas season in the various offices of the management. I accepted the invitation; and with a friend of mine who played the guitar extremely well, I sang during the Christmas season for a couple of years.

One day Mr. Bacon approached me and asked if I would care to sing on *The Firestone Hour* every Sunday night. The Firestone Tire Company, whose top manager was related to Mr. Ford, sponsored this show. I told him I was flattered but had to decline, as I would not work on Sundays. He said, "Jim, singing isn't working. And think of the prestige you would gain. Also, it would please Mr. Ford."

"Mr. Bacon," I replied, "I gave up a singing career for Christ; and even if I accepted your offer, I would have to miss Church services to rehearse with the orchestra, and that's work. I thank you very much, but I have to decline."

"I'm sorry too," he said, "but I understand."

Although I may have turned down a beautiful and lucrative offer, I have no regrets because God has blessed me more than I am worthy. He has provided for my family temporally and spiritually, something that the world could never do. In retrospect, I remember the wonderful experience God gave me prior to giving up my singing career.

## AN EXTRAORDINARY HEALING

While doing missionary work in Saginaw, Michigan, with my wife and children, we had the following healing experience.

One Sunday after a meeting held at Brother Joseph and Sister Sarah Lombardo's home, we were invited to have dinner with them. Following a

wonderful repast, we left for home. I remember that on the way home we stopped somewhere and drank some water from a well.

The day after we returned home, one of my children became very ill with pains in the stomach: nausea and vomiting. The next day my other child became sick with the same symptoms. My wife succumbed to the same thing also. The very next day, I too became very ill. We called the doctor who, after examining us, diagnosed the symptoms as typhoid infection. He suggested that our illness had come from drinking well water. On the following Sunday, we asked the Elders of the Church (who were visiting us) to anoint us. They anointed us according to the Church Ordinance and prayed with all the sincerity of their hearts. When they left, we still continued to suffer untold pain and misery.

A few minutes later, my children began to cry inconsolably because of the discomfort in their bodies. As we tried to comfort them, my wife fell on the floor in a dead faint. There I was in a terrible quandary: two children crying, my wife on the

floor, and I in great pain throughout my body. We were also burning with a very high fever. I placed my children on our bed, and then picked my wife from the floor and laid her in bed with our children. Then, with an agonizing cry, I knelt by the bedside and called upon God with a broken heart. "Oh God," I pleaded, "Behold our situation and have mercy on us." As I prayed in this way, I felt a divine power lift me to my feet; and with a loud voice I cried out, "In the name of Jesus Christ, let us be made whole!"

Immediately, my pain and fever left me. My wife awoke from her faint completely healed, and my two children stopped crying. We were all made miraculously whole. What a tremendous miracle of healing! We all knelt in prayer of thanksgiving to God who had mercifully healed us. From that moment on, we were no longer ill nor did we have to go to the hospital as the doctor had ordered. Praise the Lord for His goodness and love.

## MY HOUSE SAVED FROM FIRE IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Late one Sunday evening, my family and I returned from missionary work in Farwell, Michigan. As we turned the corner and came close to our home, we saw a crowd of people in front of my home. Quickly, we got out of the car to investigate what was going on.

Some of the people told us excitedly that there had been a fire across the alley from our house and that several homes had caught on fire, including the houses on the right and left of our home; but no flames had landed on our house. No one could believe it. They had never seen anything like it. There had been fire all around our house, in the rear as well as on either side, and yet not a spark had fallen to ignite it.

The people did not know how our home had escaped the flames, but we knew! God had protected our house because we were doing His work in spreading the Gospel in Farwell. We told some of them that the Lord was the One who had

spared our house; but whether they believed or not, the fact remains that the flames had been diverted by the divine hand of God.

As long as I live, I shall always praise the Lord for His love and grace bestowed upon my family and me. Why He ever considered me a candidate for His Kingdom or even as one of His ministers, I do not know. However, this I know, He has loved me more than I am worthy; and for this great love, I will continue to serve Him and His Holy Son, Jesus Christ, as long as He gives me breath. As a poet has penned, "I am not worthy, but He made me worthy. And now I can sing: a beggar, I walk with a king."

Serving the Lord has been an indescribable joy. Often, I ponder on His great love for me, and always I feel so small and unworthy of His blessings. I never dreamed that serving Christ would be such a pleasure. More than that, it has been an awesome experience. I wait for the time when I may see Him face to face and hear Him say, "Welcome into the joy of My rest."

## ANOTHER HEALING IN DETROIT

One day, my eldest sister, Josephine, came to my house and asked if I would go with her and pray for her friend's daughter who was so ill that she had become incoherent and disoriented. "In fact," she said, "the girl doesn't even recognize her mother or other members of her family."

Upon hearing this heart-rending story, I went with my sister to pray for this girl. Reaching her friend's home, we knocked on the door, which was opened by the girl's mother. She greeted my sister warmly as tears flowed down her cheeks. I was introduced as a minister as well as a brother. When my sister told her that I had come to pray for her daughter, the woman broke into tears again and asked us to follow her.

We went upstairs and into the girl's bedroom, where I saw a young lady lying in bed, holding her head and groaning loudly. When her mother approached her, she said, "Who are you?"

"I'm your mother," the woman replied.

"No, you're not my mother," the girl responded.

The mother looked at me with a pleading look in her eyes, as if to say, "Please help her."

I sat near the girl's bedside and began to speak softly to her, saying I had come to pray for her. She took hold of my tie and began pulling it, laughing all the while. Immediately, I discerned that she was troubled by an evil spirit.

Although she kept pulling my tie and laughing, I prayed. Suddenly, the power of the Lord came upon me, and I commanded the evil spirit to depart from her in the name of Jesus Christ. Immediately, she calmed down, and looking at her mother recognition came into her eyes; and she cried out in a loud voice, "Mama."

The mother enfolded her daughter in her arms, stroking her hair and face gently as both wept with joy. They turned to me and could not stop thanking me. I told them not to thank me but glorify God, that it was not I who did this but the power of Jesus Christ.



When we went downstairs, the girl's brother wanted to give me some money for praying for his sister. I refused, telling him that the ministers of our Church do not pray or preach for money. His reply shocked me. He said, "You're certainly different than our priest. He wouldn't come here unless I paid him."

It seemed as though they expected something to happen to the girl regardless who prayed for her.

With that, we left. While taking my sister home, she said, "Jim, I wonder why my friends never asked who you were or to which church you belong?"

"That is strange," I replied, "But how about you? Why don't you come to our Church? You have received some wonderful experiences from God regarding the truth of our Church." All she could say was, "Some day, I'll come to your Church." Sadly, my sister never joined our Church.

I have had similar experiences in praying for people. Some thanked me and then forgot me.

Others wanted to know who I was, as they felt very grateful that a stranger would go to their homes and pray for them. Notwithstanding the different attitudes, I am always ready, day or night, to attend to the sick, whoever they are. I am grateful to the Lord that I can be of help when necessity arises.

#### A LITTLE BOY HEALED MIRACULOUSLY

Many years ago in Detroit, Michigan, my family and I were having Sunday dinner with my brother Joseph's family. While dining, Rosie, his pre-teen daughter, came running into the house and breathlessly said, "A little boy was just struck by a car, and he's lying in the street. I think he's dead." Hearing this I ran outside. About a half block away, a large crowd had gathered around a woman who was holding a little boy in her arms whose body seemed to be broken. I was told that when he was struck, he had been thrown more than thirty feet from impact.

The mother was crying out to God to save her boy. My heart went out in sympathy to this tormented woman; and approaching her, I touched her gently on the shoulder. When she turned to me with a tortured look on her face, I told her that I was a minister and would she allow me to pray for her boy. She looked at me with tears running down her cheeks, and said in an anguished-filled voice, "Please pray for my little boy." By that time, more than a hundred people had gathered, including police cars. In the distance, the siren of an ambulance could be heard.

Having received permission, I knelt, laid my hands gently on the boy, and began to pray. As I knelt, the people knelt with me, including the policemen and the paramedics who had just arrived. I prayed with a broken heart to God in the name of Jesus Christ that He would have mercy on the broken body of the small boy. I was certain that he was dead. When I was through praying, the mother held my hand, thanking me profusely.

Even the policemen and the paramedics thanked me for the prayer I had offered in the boy's behalf.

Immediately, the ambulance drove off with the mother and her son, heading for the hospital. The crowd dispersed and went their separate ways. Strangely, no one asked me who I was. I returned to my brother's house, still praying in my heart for that unfortunate child. Several hours later, Rosie came running in the house saying, "Uncle Jim, that little boy you prayed for is in the street playing with other boys."

I could not believe what I was hearing. I went outside, and there he was playing as though nothing had happened to him. Upon investigation, I heard that when the doctors examined him in the emergency room, they could find nothing wrong. Every muscle and every bone was intact. I praised the Lord for this great miracle. As it is in many cases, however, nobody sought me out to ask who I was or to which church I belonged. I was not seeking any credit because God alone can perform

miracles. I wanted to witness for the Lord and His Church.

### MY SISTER JOSEPHINE'S EXPERIENCES

My sister Josephine had many experiences from God, revealing to her that The Church of Jesus Christ was the true Church, but she never obeyed despite the many times my brothers and I witnessed to her about the Gospel and the Plates which Joseph Smith translated. Following are two of her experiences.

While she was ironing clothes one day about 3:00 p.m., she raised her head and saw (literally) two hands holding a tray upon which was something she did not recognize. She heard a voice saying, "These are the Plates which your brothers have told you about." Then the vision disappeared.

One night she had a dream in which she was in her garden. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to her and said, "Josephine, if you come to Me, I'll make you an instrument in my hands. Misunderstanding

Him, she replied, "But I don't play any instruments." The Lord smiled and repeated, "If you come to Me, I'll make you an instrument in My hands."

She related the dream to my brothers and me. She was told that if she obeyed the Gospel, the Lord would use her to bring her husband and children to Him also. Considering that her family eventually numbered approximately thirty-five or forty members (including her grandchildren), what a wonderful addition it would have been to the Church. Sadly, she never obeyed the words of the Lord.

### MY SISTER MARY'S HEALING

In the early years of my Ministry, my sister Mary (the youngest of my sisters) was taken to the hospital with paralyzed kidneys. During that night, her ten-year-old daughter, Virginia, had a dream. She was standing by her mother's bed when the Lord appeared to her and said, "Tell your mother

to send for My servants who will pray for her, and she will be healed."

Little Virginia told her mother the dream, and immediately she sent for my brother Joe and me. We went to the hospital; and when we saw how terribly she was suffering, I turned to my brother, saying, "Joe, let's anoint her; she's suffering too much."

We anointed her and prayed asking God to heal her. We finished praying and waited on the Lord. Less than five minutes passed when suddenly her kidneys were healed. Quickly, the nurse came running to help her, astonished at the miraculous turn of events. When the nurse was through, we stood at her bedside; and her face and eyes were gleaming with joy. She could not stop thanking God and us while making promises that she would come to Church when she recovered. When she was released from the hospital, she had the following experience.

While sleeping one night, she heard a knock on the door (in her dream). She put her robe on and

unlocked the door. Standing there was a man clothed in white that she recognized as Jesus Christ. He had a sword in His hand, and he beckoned to her to kneel before Him. When she did, He placed the sword on her head and said, "Mary, if you come to Me, I will forgive your sins." Then the dream ended.

But alas, with all these blessings, she did not obey the Gospel. She even forgot her promise to come to Church. I still pray that God will have mercy on her, for she suffered very much in this life. She died afflicted with cancer.

## CALIFORNIA BOUND

At the April 1947 General Church Conference, I arose and bade the saints farewell because I was leaving for California with my family. While I was addressing the congregation, the gift of tongues was manifested, and two sisters had the same interpretation. One, an Italian sister who had recently come from Italy (Brother Alex Gentile's mother)



and who did not understand one word in English, and an English-speaking sister who did not understand the Italian language. They both understood the gift of tongues in their native language. It was "Go, and I will carry you in the palm of My hand." What a wonderful way to say goodbye to the people of God! Encouraged by this message, we prepared to depart for California despite the fact that I had previously had mixed emotions about leaving Detroit.

In the early part of September 1947, my family and I arrived in California, being motivated by the Spirit of the Lord to do so. I had previously been hesitant about leaving for the West Coast because I was leaving the General Body of the Church; but when I remembered how God had revealed Himself in such a powerful manner at the Conference, I had no more doubts.

At this juncture, I wish to state unequivocally that my family and I went to the West Coast with the express purpose of helping the Church in that region.

When we arrived in California, we found a few brothers and sisters holding one meeting in a Women's Club on Sundays and another midweek meeting from house to house. There was also a small group holding meetings in San Diego. Shortly after arriving, we purchased a home in a small city called South Gate.

Everything was not rosy for us in California. We underwent great financial losses. We went there with several thousand dollars in our possession, but within two years we were wiped out completely; and I had to accept jobs that paid very little. I left a good position with the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, which paid me well. Nevertheless, my family and I were not discouraged, for the desire to preach the Gospel and help the Church was increasing every day rather than diminishing. Every night we would visit someone and tell the story of this beautiful Gospel.

MY WIFE'S EXPERIENCE AS WE TRAVELED  
WESTWARD (HER OWN WORDS)

On the way to California, we arrived at a mountain. When we reached its top, at a "car stop," we got out of the car to admire its magnificence. We were astonished at its splendor: beauty beyond anything or any place we had ever been or seen. The sky seemed so close; we all felt that if God would open our eyes, we would behold His glory.

As we looked in amazement, my husband began to sneeze uncontrollably. Sneeze, sneeze, and more sneezes! During a lull in his sneezing attack, he turned to us and said, "I hate to say this, but if I don't stop sneezing, we will have to return as I will not be able to drive to California." This stunned my children and me. We were so close! We became very quiet in our terrible disappointment.

While offering a prayer to the Almighty, His words through the gift of tongues and interpretation came to me, "You go, and I will carry you in the palm of My hand." I cried out silently in my heart, "What does this all mean, Lord?" At the

same time, I looked up at the sky from the top of the mountain at whose beauty we had marveled. Suddenly, I blinked my eyes and saw the heavens open. An arm appeared covered with a white sleeve beyond any white I have ever seen. The beautiful hand, extending from the arm, opened a large door that had appeared. I came to myself immediately--I must have been transported--and told my husband and children, "We are going on. I just saw an arm and a hand opening a large door. The Lord wants us to go to California."

Still sneezing, my husband said, "Let's go. We'll trust in God." As he spoke these words, the sneezing stopped much to our delight. We got in the car and began singing:

"So we'll roll the old chariot along.  
So we'll roll the old chariot along.  
So we'll roll the old chariot along.  
And we'll not drag on behind."

My children had a holiday on the trip to the West Coast: singing hymns, songs, and laughing all the way. They were a wonderful joy to have on this long, weary journey.

After our financial reversal, God began to bless us naturally and much more spiritually. My wife, true to her love for God and me, helped me in every way conceivable. She worked as conscientiously as I, both for the home and for the Church. We raised our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord until they, at a very young age, were baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ. They were wonderful children (they still are). We never had concern with them or about them. Our home was a happy one: full of laughter, song, and mirth. Our home was always filled with young people because of my children's delightful ways with them.

I began to labor diligently with all the saints of California and especially with the Ministry. I encouraged combined gatherings with the San Diego and Los Angeles members; and as a

consequence, we enjoyed wonderful blessings. The Priesthood of California was willing and ready to work with me and to bend every effort in promulgating the Gospel and the spiritual welfare of the Church.

I suggested and encouraged the forming of districts in the General Church. The Ministry of California was agreeable with me on this matter. However, many in the General Church Priesthood were not in favor of creating districts. Thanks to the late President Brother William H. Cadman who supported me on the matter, and through insistence, we were subsequently given permission by the General Church Priesthood to create a district in California, as a pilot project.

I wrote the laws, bylaws, and regulations that became the constitution of all the districts in the General Church. I was elected as the first president of the California District, in which position I served for nine wonderful years. I give credit and thanks to all the California Priesthood for their support during my tenure as president. Without their help

and the Grace of God, it would have been a more difficult situation. When people work together, the most difficult jobs and endeavors can be accomplished.

The first Twelve Apostles turned the world upside down as they followed the instructions of Jesus Christ, "Go ye out into the world and preach My gospel...." They witnessed for Christ with a zeal born of Faith, believing that their Lord and Master would be with them wherever they brought the "good news" of their Redeemer. Prisons did not frighten them nor did any manner of persecution as Christ was with them in every ordeal as He had promised. The Lord always keeps His promises. All praise be to Him!

#### A HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE

Sometime before moving to Florida, Brother James Heaps passed away from this life. The family asked me to officiate at his funeral. The night before the funeral, my wife and I stayed at a motel

near Anaheim, California. When I retired, I had a wonderful experience. Whether I was asleep, awake, or carried away in the spirit, I cannot ascertain. All I can say is that suddenly I saw Brother James Heaps, and the first thing I asked him was, "How is Paradise?" He smiled and said, "If I described it, you would not be able to understand it fully. It is beyond the comprehension of man. For this cause, many saints who sought to write about heaven were forbidden because the mortal tongue cannot describe its beauty, neither can the mortal mind understand its glory. It's beyond my earthly expectations. All I can say is, it was worth it all."

Then, I asked him, "Tell me about the soul. Has it a form?" He replied, "Yes, it has a form but not as you suppose. Can you describe the wind? Has it a form? Can you describe the sun, which at dusk appears round but is not as mortal eyes see it? "The mortal body is measured. Some are short, some tall, some thin, and others stout, but the soul cannot be measured in length, width, or breadth. It is pure



and holy as God is pure and holy who gave it. The more righteous the mortal body, the more beautiful the soul in the presence of God." I wanted to ask him more about the soul, but he said, "Do not trouble yourself over much with the mysteries of heaven, for it will be revealed to you when you get here."

Then he said, "Tell my family to be faithful to the Gospel which they embraced. Tell them to be compassionate, kind, meek, and humble. Tell those of my family who are not in the Church that if they want to see me again, they must follow me as I followed Christ."

"And tell Peg," he said, (which I understood to be his wife) "that though I was not much with romantic words, I loved her very much. Tell Elizabeth I have seen Bonnie. Tell Penny (my daughter) I have seen and held little Lisa Marie. Tell the saints that there is a place for infants, a place for the young, and a place for the old. (I understood this to mean that there is room for all in Paradise.) Yet, there are no young and no old here,

but all are radiantly happy in the Lord, as the Angels of Heaven."

He continued, "I have seen the resurrected bodies of those from the beginning of the world to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and they are glorious. I have seen the souls of many of our loved ones who have passed away." He mentioned his parents, Brothers Cherry and Cadman, Sister Madonia, and a host of others.

Then I interrupted him and asked, "If this is your spirit (understanding it to be the same as the soul), how is it I see you as you were on earth?" He smiled and said, "If I appeared as I am in the spirit, your mortal eyes could not behold me. Therefore, you see me as I was, not as I am. I see, I hear, I speak, I walk, and talk; yet I am spirit."

I asked him about the work that the Church wanted me to do. He replied, "I too was not in favor of this, but I was in error. Do you remember Sister Moraco's dream that He loved you and was going to use you? Do not fear man or what a few men may say, but obey the Lord and do what you

can; for little or much, great is the reward of those who love and give service to Him."

I then asked him, "Do you know all things now?" He gently smiled, and putting his arm around me, said, "Dear Brother Jim, beloved of the Lord; though a million years pass on, we only begin to learn. Yet, in comparison to mortal man, we know all things."

I asked him, "Do you have a message for the saints?" He replied, "Tell them the Bible is true and the Book of Mormon is true; that these two records will establish peace and someday help to build Zion. Tell them, farewell, until we meet before the pleasing bar of the Great Jehovah." Then, I attempted to ask him more, but he said, "No more questions Brother Jim, but contend for the Faith." And with that, he was gone. This was the end of my experience.

During the above experience, I would receive a portion of it; then I would awaken, get up, and write what I had seen and heard. I would then lie down again; have another portion of the

experience; awaken again, get up, and write what I had seen and heard. This occurred several times during the night. I have never had an experience like this in my life.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MISSIONARY ENDEAVORS  
OF THE PERDUE FAMILY BY SISTER  
MARY R. LOVALVO

The first time I met Sister Evelyn Perdue was in September 1947. We had just arrived in California after a long exhausting trip from Detroit, Michigan. My husband, V. James Lovalvo, had often told me about her determination to be baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ and that she was of a Jewish parentage. Now to find out that she of the Tribe of Judah marrying Edward Perdue of the Tribe of Joseph, both Israelites, was more than a coincidence. My husband and I were overwhelmed; a Jewess and a Josephite were getting married! Isn't this symbolic of what The Church of Jesus Christ believes? Judah and Joseph

(including the rest of the House of Israel), together with the Gentiles, shall in the last days build the House of the Lord in the New Jerusalem upon the land of America. Sister Evelyn and I became fast friends. I loved to hear her testimony. Nobody could say, "Jesus Christ, my Lord" as she did in her testimony.

She worked in downtown Los Angeles as a secretary, and I worked two blocks away as an assistant designer, at a place where they made ladies' designer suits for Saks Fifth Avenue. We met several times during lunch hour; and as we conversed, her love for Jesus Christ never ceased to amaze me. I shared her love for the Lord; and when I would say, "Evelyn, when you mention the name of Jesus Christ, I am overwhelmed with blessings." Her reply was "Mary, dear Mary."

Our friendship and relationship had grown to a beautiful level. Once, she did not see me at lunch hour or at Church, and upon inquiring was told that I had taken a leave of absence to take care of my daughter who was sick with pneumonia.

Immediately, she and Brother Eddie came to visit us. That was a night to remember. She handed me a check with my name and her signature on it. She told us that when she heard of our Priscilla's illness, she went to God in prayer for us. That night she had a dream in which the Lord told her to give us some financial assistance. At that time, I had not worked for over a month, and my husband had a job in which he earned two-thirds less than he did in Detroit. As Sister Evelyn presented the check, she said, "We have \$500 in the bank. You may write any amount up to \$500 or take all of it." We looked at both of them, overcome at their generosity. And blessed Eddie he did not say much, but his love for us was evident. "Love, such love," I thought.

I shall never forget that night. We prayed together and shared many experiences. Then, I turned to Evelyn and said, "God came in your dream and sent you here because we feel alone and forgotten in California. Now this show of affection from both of you is all I needed, knowing also that

God sent you to us. I will not accept this check now because I am hoping that God will heal my daughter, and I will go back to work soon. If I need some money, I will ask you for it."

Shortly afterwards, I had a dream in which I saw Brother Perdue with his feet planted on a high hill. With his arms outstretched, he was calling to his people (the Seed of Joseph) to come to Jesus Christ the Lord. At that time, I was not acquainted with his people. When I related this experience to Sister Evelyn, she laughed, saying, "Eddie? He's not inclined to hold a conversation very long, let alone preaching." She was soon to learn how well the Lord blessed her husband's words.

In process of time, Sister Perdue had surgery performed on her back from which she was not recovering. To get a little rest, she had to sleep on a lounge chair. As she was praying one night for relief from her pain, the Lord spoke to her saying, "Evelyn, if you are willing to work for Me, I will bless you." Immediately, she asked, "Lord what is the work You want me to do?" In that instant, she

remembered my dream and told the Lord that she would work for Him.

Shortly thereafter, Sister Evelyn and Brother Eddie started to work among the Mexican people in Los Nietos. After that, there was an opening to preach in Tijuana, Mexico. They went there and worked diligently day and night among the people. Soon, they moved there but suffered affliction and persecution.

One afternoon they came to visit us, driving many miles to do so. As soon as I opened the door, I asked, "What are you doing here? You were both in my dream last night." A short while after they entered, I said, "I saw you both on a dusty hill, and Eddie was digging. Wherever he dug, water sprang out. Little children came and drank from the water. With the help of other Elders, Brother Eddie built walls around this clear, clean water. I saw the children also swim in the water. It was a joy to behold." After I related my dream, it seemed to renew their hope.



During their visit, my husband anointed Sister Evelyn for her affliction. By the time they left, she was feeling much better. When they left, I thought, "The tribe of Judah and the tribe of Joseph going back to Tijuana with more determination to fulfill that which the Lord had commanded them to do." Brother Eddie, blessed man, had as much resolve to work for God as his wife did.

Eventually, a church was built on the same hill that I had seen in my dream. Sister Evelyn asked us to go to the dedication of the church and celebrate the event with them. As we entered Tijuana on the day of dedication and saw the hill (of my dream), I stood in amazement. I could not believe my eyes. The church was filled to capacity with the sound of beautiful singing echoing all around. It was wonderful, full of joy and gladness.

Brother Eddie's preaching was a blessing: full of God's Spirit and Authority. Sister Evelyn was like a mother to all. I could see that they were seeking direction from her, something that she did willingly, born of love for the people. With Brother

Eddie at the helm, the work among the Seed of Joseph grew rapidly.

At that period of time, the General Church sent my husband to do some missionary work. When we returned, we ventured into a new business; and being low on funds, we decided not to take any more trips for a while. Shortly, we heard that a new church building was going to be dedicated among the Seed of Joseph in Ahome, Mexico. "Oh, how we would like to go," my heart cried, but we could not close our office.

A few days before a group of brothers and sisters was preparing to leave for Ahome, where the new church was situated, I received a call from Sister Evelyn whom I had not seen for a long while. It was good to hear her voice. After the salutations, she said, "Are you and Brother Jim ready to leave and see the fulfillment of your dreams?" Oh, how I wanted to tell her "Yes." Instead, I said, "Not this time. Maybe in a couple of years. It's financially impossible now." We said our goodbyes, expressing our hopes to see each other soon.

The next day, an airmail special delivery envelope arrived containing a cashier's check in sufficient amount for two airplane round-trip tickets and enough for food and hotel accommodations. In the envelope was also enclosed a beautiful letter in which she stated the importance of my husband's and my attendance at this dedication. She continued saying that the check was a loan and to use all of it or as much as we needed. "Your presence is a must," she concluded.

She must have been inspired to send us the check; and the Lord was preparing a blessing for us in Mexico; for after reading the letter to my husband, we said in unison, "We are going." We decided also to return the check to Sister Evelyn and use our credit card again. My husband said, "Let's do it, we can't get any lower financially."

Because of the lack of time and not being informed regarding permission to travel in Mexico, we were found without a visa at the Mexican airport. Many of our church members who were

going to Sinaloa were permitted to go through the gate because they had visas. We were detained and asked to step to one side and be ready to be sent back to the United States. My husband and I were speechless.

Brother Eddie and Sister Evelyn stepped up to the immigration officers and pleaded with them to let us enter the land of Mexico; telling them that it was important that we be approved as my husband was a minister, and we were going to a church dedication in Sinaloa. The officer called his supervisor who, after listening to them and to my nephew, Sam Randy, appeal to him in our behalf; shook his head, denying us entry saying he could not break the law. He started to leave, apparently bored with the insistence of the three members speaking in our favor. Suddenly, he turned back and signed his name permitting us to pass through. We thanked the Lord for His intervention; otherwise, we would have had to return home.

Finally, we reached our destination and saw the new church that our brothers had labored so hard

to build. What a beautiful church! It had showers, a kitchen, eating area, bedrooms, and a courtyard. Oh yes, the auditorium was beautiful. The brothers from the United States, with the help of the members in Mexico, had worked tirelessly to erect the church.

Sunday was a glorious day. Brother Frank Calabrese opened the meeting speaking in the Spanish language, which was blessed of the Lord. After he was through speaking, Brother Perdue, who was in charge, asked my husband to follow. He said a few words in Spanish, which the people enjoyed; then he began preaching in English while Brother Eddie translated in Spanish. This went on for a couple of minutes, and then something strangely wonderful happened. My husband did not wait any longer for Brother Eddie to translate. Instead, under the Spirit of God they both spoke at the same time saying the same things, one in English and the other in Spanish. It is difficult to explain the glorious preaching of those brothers.

Other Elder brothers spoke, being blessed by the Spirit of God.

There were several baptisms that day also. It was a day to remember for a long while. At the end of the meeting, Sister Evelyn came to me and said, "Sister Mary, how does it feel to have our dreams come to a realization?" Faith is the Victory!

Because of listening to and obeying the voice of God, the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ among the Seed of Joseph in Mexico will remain a memorial to this fine sister's faith; and that of her husband, Edward Perdue; and her daughter, Norma Kennedy. Dear faithful Evelyn, my friend, it is my prayer that as you sit at the feet of Jesus Christ in Paradise, a place will be there for me also. The memory of you and your missionary work will be in the hearts and minds of all who love to witness for Christ, the Lord, the Living Son of God. Amen.

## A HEALING IN A MEXICAN AIRPORT

Several years ago, some brothers from the United States of America helped build a church in Ahome, Mexico. My wife and I and many members from America boarded the plane in Tijuana, Mexico, and stopped at a small airport to wait for another plane to take us to Ahome. While waiting, a young Mexican man had a convulsion, and those with him were calling for a doctor but there was none available. Feeling a great pity for this stranger, I made my way to him; and upon reaching him, I told his family that I was a minister, and would they permit me to pray for him. They consented readily, and tearfully asked me to implore the Lord in his sake. I laid my hands upon his head and prayed mightily to God in his behalf. While I was praying, his convulsion ceased completely. When I was through praying, he and his family thanked me profusely; but I told them to thank the Lord who is merciful and kind.

How wonderful it was to see the power of God manifested in such a miraculous manner. The

family tried to converse with me; but since I do not speak in the Spanish language very well, it was a difficult situation. Nevertheless, they understood that it was the power of God that brought the young man out of his misery. Before we had any opportunity to exchange addresses, the plane arrived and we had to depart. I thank God for His love and grace in the time of dire needs. The rest is history.

#### AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE AT BELL, CALIFORNIA

While building the church structure at Bell, California, a dreadful thing occurred which later turned out to be a blessing. Every Saturday morning the brothers and sisters would go to work on the building in fasting and prayer. We still had the small building where we met while constructing the larger one. The brothers worked and the sisters would cook the food for them.



One day, Brother Louis Biscotti had the gas turned off on the kitchen stove to repair a pipe. After the repair, someone turned the gas on without lighting the pilot. This caused the oven to fill with gas fumes. My wife had placed a tray of chicken in the oven; and thinking that the gas was turned off, lit a match and bending, put her hand with a lighted match in the oven. Immediately, the gas fumes burst into a fiery flame upon her face. Screaming, she sought for help, thinking that her face and hair were burned completely. Sister Annette Labanaskas put her arms around her to stamp out the flames, while the rest were calling for help. Sister Labanaskas had such loving courage when she put her own life in danger, and this will never be forgotten by my wife.

When I heard my wife scream, I climbed down from a scaffold and rushed into the small building, where I saw that her face had turned as red as a pepper. "My God," I cried, "Please help her." We laid her down on a couch, and Brother Jim Heaps took the bottle of blessed oil and literally poured

the whole bottle on her head and face. We all knelt and prayed mightily, along with Brother Heaps who was praying his heart out to God in behalf of my wife.

Afterwards, I wanted to take her to the hospital because she could not see. She refused to go, so I took her home where we continued praying. I thought that certainly her face would be scarred with third degree burns. When she awoke the next day, her face was as clear as before the accident; and she could see normally. Her eyebrows were slightly scorched and part of her hair. Nonetheless, she managed to arrange her hair so it would not show the damage. Imagine our joy at seeing the power of God at work! When the brothers and sisters saw her in Church, they raised their voices in thanksgiving to the Lord for His miraculous favor. We concur with the poet, "How can we sufficiently praise Him?"

## THE GIFT OF TONGUES RESTORED

Another marvelous experience occurred and needs to be told, but I have to first preface this with a brief history.

Many years before going to California, Brother Mark Randy had received the gift of tongues from the Lord. Somehow, through stress or other factors, his gift ceased to manifest itself in a short time. Even after he and his family moved to California, the gift was absent.

One weekend, the district had a gathering in Modesto. At the Sunday afternoon service, it was said by one of the ministers that we need the gift of tongues in every branch. When the saints began to testify under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Sister Margaret Henderson--nee Heaps--arose and said that if the Elders would lay hands on her, she believed that God would give her that gift. We called her to the front; and after she was seated, the Ministry laid hands on her head. While the brother was praying, Brother Mark Randy broke out in the gift of tongues! What a glorious outpouring of the

Spirit of God! Instead of Sister Margaret receiving the gift of tongues, the Lord restored it to Brother Mark. The Lord works in a mysterious way, His wonder to perform. Praise be to God!

### THE EARLY DAYS IN CALIFORNIA

Many brothers and sisters began to migrate westward. This eventually was the means of creating new missions and branches in California, which at this time consist of Bell, San Diego, Modesto, San Fernando Valley (now located in Simi Valley), Anaheim, Yucaipa, Lindsay, and in many places in Mexico.

I made many attempts to preach to the Native Americans in some of the Indian Reservations but had little success among them.

In 1948, my family and I began to hold meetings in San Fernando Valley, where we enjoyed wonderful outpourings of God's Holy Spirit. We first met in the home of Sister Ridosh. At that time, there was no air conditioning in the

homes. Just imagine holding meetings in the summer with temperatures over a hundred degrees! Notwithstanding the heat, the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon us made the heat seem insignificant. Sometimes during the summer, we would hold meetings outdoors because it was overbearingly hot inside the house.

In the latter part of 1949, I thought about going back to Detroit, Michigan, for a while. In the interim, I heard that Brother Rocco Meo desired to start another mission. I asked him to work in San Fernando Valley as the possibilities for growth were there. He consented and worked diligently. Eventually, with the help of other brothers and sisters a beautiful branch of the Church was developed.

My family and I went back to Detroit for about two years and then returned to California. After our return, we moved to Eagle Rock for a short while. During that time, we went to the Bell Branch, driving approximately twenty-five miles to attend the midweek and Sunday services. On

Thursday nights, my wife and children would drive a long distance for choir practice, which they enjoyed immensely. I spent many wonderful years going from branch to branch: holding meetings, seminars, and also teaching the Apostasy and Restoration. There will always be a tender spot in my heart for the Church in California.

From Eagle Rock, we moved to San Fernando Valley where we had purchased a home. Although our membership was at the Bell Branch, we attended both places, dividing our time between them. Eventually, we transferred to the Valley Branch and met with saints in that humble building which the Cavallaro family had converted from a chicken coop. Nonetheless, God's blessings attended us in abundance. No matter where the saints meet to worship the Almighty, His Spirit will be there.

With sadness, I remember the passing away of Brother Rocco Meo. He gave his heart and soul laboring in San Fernando Valley.

In the interim, the Watson family (Brother Bob, Sister Sarah, and their three children; their parents, Brother Bob, Sr., and Sister Nancy) moved to California.

In the last months of illness, Brother Meo was not able to perform his duties as Presiding Elder; and as a consequence, the need for another Presiding Elder arose. At a General Church Conference, I nominated Brother Bob Watson, Jr., for the position. The Priesthood accepted the nomination and elected him to that office. A few days after I returned home, Brother Bob, Jr., Sister Sarah, and his father and mother came to my home to discuss his nomination as Presiding Elder.

After some discussion, I told Brother Bob that if he could not handle the position at this time, I would take it until someone would be elected. Accordingly, they left our home saying they would pray about the matter. Brother Bob had an experience which encouraged him to accept the position of Presiding Elder. Brother Bob, Sister

Sarah, and their children worked very diligently in the San Fernando Valley Branch.

In a few years, the members bought a lot on Roscoe Boulevard; and with the help of God and the help of many brothers and sisters from near and far, a most beautiful church was built. I have always said that the Valley Branch was the closest thing to heaven because of the unity among the Ministry and members and the glory of God which filled the sanctuary when the saints gathered together. After Brother Bob Watson's term expired, Brother Frank Genaro was elected to preside. Later I presided over the branch for two years.

We had a choir that was composed of about thirty members. I felt exceptionally honored to conduct this group. We sang not only regular hymns of worship and praise but classical religious songs as well, including the "Hallelujah Chorus" from the *Oratorio Messiah*. Perhaps I'm boasting a little, but I dare say that we could have given the Mormon Church choir some serious competition.



AN UNUSUAL ENCOUNTER  
WITH MR. BULOVA

In 1955, I opened a men's barber and hair styling salon in Encino, California. I had five people working for me. Those who came to my shop were of a typical "carriage trade" clientele of doctors, lawyers, movie stars, and businessmen.

One day, I heard that a Mr. Bulova, the owner and president of the famous Bulova Watch Company, had bought a mansion near my shop. I was told that he had cancer throughout his body and was in California for treatments. He refused to go to a hospital, so he had all the necessary equipment brought to his house. To my surprise, I received a telephone call one morning from a woman who said she was Mr. Bulova's nurse. She said that Mr. Bulova wanted to speak with me.

The next morning, I went to his home and was greeted by a tall, distinguished gentleman who introduced himself as Mr. Bulova. I noted at glance that there was an arrogance about him that bespoke power and an attitude of a lord to his

subject. Without ado, he said, "I want you to shave me every morning at eight o'clock sharp." His behavior bothered me quite a bit; but holding my composure, I replied, "I will come and shave you every day but Sunday." I could see that my answer shocked him; he was not accustomed to anyone questioning his demands.

"Why not on Sundays?" he said, a little rankled.

"Because I go to Church on Sundays with my family, and I don't work for anyone on that day," I replied.

Because of his attitude, I had already made up my mind not to comply with his wishes. He looked at me for quite a while, saying nothing. We both looked at each other silently. Finally, he said, "All right, every day but Sundays." Then he smiled and stretched out his hand shaking mine with a firm grip.

I went to his house every day to shave him. After several days, I saw that he was getting thinner and weaker. One day he asked me who I

was and to what church I belonged. I told him that I was a minister and all about our Faith and Doctrine. A week later, after I had finished shaving him, he held my hand and said, "Jim, please talk to me about Jesus." I was astounded, but I spent some time with him and then prayed by his bedside.

For three months I went to his home; and in that period of time, I saw a once haughty, arrogant man, albeit a very sick one, become humble and penitent. Often, he would ask me to pray for him, which I gladly did. However, he had a sister staying with him who resented every moment I spent with him. I discerned that she was afraid her brother would get to like me and probably mention me in his will. This, of course, was the furthest thing from my mind. I was hoping that he would convert to Jesus Christ from Judaism.

One morning when I went to his house, his sister met me at the door and arrogantly said, "You don't have to come here any more. Mr. Bulova died early this morning, and he's being shipped back to Chicago to be buried in the Jewish faith." And with

that, she closed the door loudly. I prayed that God would have mercy on this man whom I had learned to like very much.

### A TRIP TO FLORIDA

In 1968, Brothers Nick Pietrangelo, Rocco Biscotti, and I were sent to Florida by the General Church to explore the possibilities of establishing a district there. After some investigation, we organized a district in Florida with Brother Alvin Swanson as President and Brothers Ernie Schultz and Dominic Giovannone as First and Second Counselors, respectively. In 1969, I returned to Florida with my wife and worked with these brothers in that part of God's vineyard.

Needless to say, these brothers threw themselves into their positions with sincerity and zeal and served the district with all their hearts.

## ELECTED AS THE GENERAL CHURCH APPOINTEE

In 1969, the Church asked for a volunteer to help and instruct any branch or district that needed his services. At this request, God's Spirit descended upon me; and rising to my feet, I volunteered. Accordingly, I was elected as a General Church Appointee to go throughout the Church, holding seminars with the Ministry and members of the respective branches. I would teach, instruct, and counsel them on the Faith and Doctrine of the Church and in all the phases of the Restored Gospel.

When I broached the subject to my wife, she had some misgivings and wanted to ask God about it. Although she was very concerned about the matter, she consented to go with me. Later she told me that she had fasted and prayed, asking the Lord to give us guidance and strength as we were leaving our children and grandchildren. She asked the Lord, "What shall I do in a strange land: alone and so far away from our established home?"

Immediately, she heard the voice of the Spirit saying, "Go, and I will take care of you and provide for you." In retrospect, I will say unequivocally that the Lord kept His promise to us, despite the many obstacles that the evil one put in our way. God is mightier than the devil, and He kept us in the palm of His hand every day. I often look back in wonder at the way the Lord protected us from evil and supplied our needs so graciously.

## OUR MISSION IN NEW JERSEY

Our first mission was in New Jersey. The saints welcomed us with open arms and hearts. However, since we did not want to burden anyone, we rented a small place. It was indeed tiny. It was in the attic of a small house and consisted of a bedroom, a kitchen, and a tiny bathroom. It was vastly different than our home in San Fernando Valley. Nevertheless, we accommodated ourselves as much as possible.

Brother Sam and Sister Rose Risola let us use one of their cars to visit the various branches and the members. God bless them for their charitable act. We were invited by many families for lunches and dinners. I can only thank the Lord for their hospitality. We spent three months in this district and several months in Florida. The classes I conducted were blessed indeed. The studies involved the Faith and Doctrine, Law and Order, Apostasy and Restoration, and Christ's Commandments.

The members attended the classes with a lot of spiritual anticipation. Everyone, it appeared, participated in all the seminars I held. At times, no one wanted to have the class dismissed because of the interesting topics presented. Our stay in that part of God's vineyard was enjoyable, to say the least. The Lord was with us everywhere we went: blessing us in prayer, preaching, and exhorting the saints to reach for higher levels of righteousness.

Our stay in God's vineyard seemed only too brief. I was sorry to see our visit end. The saints bade us farewell with joy and tears. How

wonderful it felt to receive this welcome, indeed, an unforgettable adventure.

## BOUND FOR FLORIDA

We sold our home in California to my niece, Elaine Jordan, for exactly the amount of money we had put into it, no profit at all. We were glad they were the buyers rather than strangers. (At this time, my children were married.)

I sold my business in California, and my wife again left her place of employment at the May Company. She had been working there for thirteen years, as a manager over four departments, and agreed to accompany me to Florida. She had only needed to be at the May Company two more years and all her benefits would have been guaranteed. By coming with me, she forfeited all her retirement benefits. However, I knew that God would provide for us. She was still uncertain whether we had made the right choice. Time would tell!



While we were riding in the plane towards Florida, she heard a voice saying, "Go, and you will find a brother and a friend." In consequence thereof, we moved to Florida in late 1969; where I endeavored to preach, teach, and instruct everyone in the Faith and Doctrine of the Church and the duties and deportment attendant upon the Ministry to promulgate the Restored Gospel. Without hesitation, I can say that ministers and members were very cooperative.

This office conferred upon me by the General Church was supposed to be permanent, albeit reviewed every six months by the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

In Florida, we lived in places where I would have never given a second thought at home. The church gave us \$425 a month for sustenance. This included rent, gasoline, food, and clothing. Despite that small amount, we took on the job; believing and trusting that God would take care of us.

If the occasion ever arose that we would have to take a room in some motel, we could not do so

as our funds were insufficient. As a matter of fact, one night my wife and I slept in our car. Notwithstanding these adverse conditions, we never complained to anyone. We simply trusted in the Lord as He blessed us abundantly every day. Also, the brothers and sisters in Florida were very hospitable and caring towards us.

We traveled constantly from one branch to another, holding seminars with the Elders and Teachers and at times with the entire congregation: teaching and preaching to encourage the members to a higher level of righteousness. We drove from the East Coast to the West Coast of Florida unceasingly. Thanks to God, everyone accepted us warmly.

However, because of certain criticisms, we decided to unburden the Church of the \$425 a month and continue in my assignment on our own, knowing that God would be with us.

Whatever money we had of our own soon began to deplete. Our nourishment was very meager as we tried to be frugal in every phase of

living, but it caught up with us. We both developed health problems due to insufficient substance. Notwithstanding these conditions, we continued laboring in that which the Church had sent us, complaining to no one. We trusted in God to carry us through. Many were the blessings God showered upon us for which we will be forever grateful.

Soon, I went to work as a barber, earning about \$75 a week. With diligence, we continued to fulfill our spiritual appointment. We were not discouraged as God always came to our rescue. Shortly, the Lord touched the hearts of some of my customers: a bank president, the owner and manager of an important radio station, and a few wealthy people. These men gave us encouragement and hope. Slowly but surely, God provided us with proper income and a comfortable home. There is no way I can ever repay the Lord for His everlasting kindness and love. He has always "come through" whenever things seemed impossible to solve. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord."

## AN EXPERIENCE WHEN WE BOUGHT OUR FIRST HOME IN FLORIDA

Although we underwent some trials and hardships while in our mission in Florida, the Lord's Spirit never left us. In process of time, I opened a barbershop in Port Ste. Lucie. Business was very slow and discouraging. One day a man came to get a hairstyle; and while I was cutting his hair, he told me that he owned the top radio station in the city of Stuart (about ten miles south).

When I was through with his hairstyle, he was extremely pleased. In consequence thereof, he told me that he would give my shop a three-minute advertisement daily. I asked him how much it would cost because I could not afford a spot on any station.

"I'll take it out on hairstyles," he replied.

Beginning the next day, he advertised my shop daily. This increased my business a little. Two days later, the president of the bank in Stuart came to my shop. He was also pleased with my work. He began to tell his friends and customers about my

shop, to the end that my business increased daily. For that I am grateful to the Lord; He was absolutely wonderful to us.

One day, my wife told me that she had made an offer on a small house, called a villa, and the real estate agent informed her that the owners had accepted the offer. Accordingly, the agent contacted the bank that owned the mortgage. In turn, the bank investigated our credit standing and discovered that we owed nothing to anyone because we always paid our bills on time. The manager of the bank promised us a loan without asking for any collateral, plus advancing us \$5,000 to help us out until we would be able to pay it back to the bank. He was very pleased with us and said, "You are the kind of people we want in Florida." I could not believe how God was working on these strange men who had never known us. The Lord works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. Dear reader, trust in God, work for Him, and He will open the windows of heaven and pour out His blessings upon you.

In a few days we went to the agent's office to finalize the purchase. I sat in a chair which faced the main street called US 1 Highway. While the agent was preparing the purchase papers, I looked across the street through the window and saw the entire block of trees filled with large golden-colored flowers. They were the most beautiful of God's creation that I had ever seen.

I must have looked at that block of flower-covered trees for at least fifteen minutes. I could not stop admiring them. I turned to the agent and asked him if those trees across the street bloomed every year. He looked at me as though I had gone out of my mind. I immediately changed the subject lest that I would appear foolish.

I looked across the street again, but there were no trees with flowers but small ordinary bushes. I was stunned. I knew that I had seen a block of trees covered with beautiful flowers. Now, there was nothing.

After signing the proper papers, we left the agent's office. In the car, my wife asked me about

what I had seen. I said, "Mary, I saw the most beautiful vision of the handiwork of God. I looked at them for over fifteen minutes." She replied, "I believe that God is telling you that what we are doing is His blessing."

Every evening the next week, we drove past that agent's office at the same time I had that vision (around 6:00 p.m.) but saw nothing but shrubs. I know that my wife was right. God had blessed us more than we deserved. From that time on, the Lord began to prosper us in many ways: spiritually and naturally. We thank the Lord daily for His goodness and love towards us.

#### AN EXPERIENCE IN WHICH I SAW THE LATE BROTHER ALEXANDER CHERRY

While laboring in Florida, I had a most unusual yet marvelous experience, wherein I conversed all night with the late president of our Church, Brother Alexander Cherry.

In this experience with Brother Cherry, I was carried away in the Spirit for a while; then I would awaken, get up, and write what I saw and heard. Again, I would lie down and the same thing would occur. What happened to me in the experience with Brother James Heaps, happened on this night also.

On January 19, 1973, about 1:30 a.m. and continuing to about 5:00 a.m., I had the following experience.

Upon retiring around midnight of January 18, I suddenly became very restless: physically and mentally. I arose and kneeling at my bedside, prayed that the Lord would give me rest. While praying, a strange feeling came over me; and immediately I knew I was going to experience something spiritual. I lay down to rest; when suddenly, whether asleep or carried away in the Spirit, I saw a large and spacious field. In the midst of this field was a most beautiful tree, such as I had never seen before. Its branches seemed to spread over the entire earth as far as I could see. I saw a



man under the tree who beckoned to me to come to him.

As I approached him, I recognized him to be Brother Alexander Cherry. I had never seen Brother Cherry except in a photograph. His eyes were bright and beautiful; and they appeared to be solemn, yet twinkled with an inner beauty that bespoke of a spiritual understanding and kindness. He also had a well-trimmed beard. He was wearing a suit of clothes whose color I cannot describe and over which he wore a beautifully tailored coat.

I asked, "Aren't you Brother Alexander Cherry?"

He smiled and nodded his head in acknowledgment of his name. Immediately, I said to him, "There was something I wanted to ask Brother Heaps when I spoke to him in my experience with him after he died, but I did not have the opportunity. Please tell me about the Resurrection. How do the bodies arise who have crumbled to dust in the graves, who have been

drowned in the sea, who have been burned by fire, or who have been devoured by wild beasts?"

He answered, "Come with me." He took me by the hand; and when he touched me, a glorious feeling overshadowed my entire body. He led me to the shore of a large body of water, and then said, "Look." As I looked on the waters, I heard the sound of many trumpets, while from the sea I saw many personages clothed in the most beautiful, white garments arise. Immediately, I saw the heavens open; and descending from above, I saw what appeared to be small transparent clouds, and outlined in them the counterparts of those personages who had come up from the waters.

As they descended, each one went to one of those who had risen from the waters; as they met they seemed to first superimpose the body and then completely unite as one. As they united, I beheld that the bodies became more radiant than ever before. I knew I was witnessing the uniting of the body and soul at the time of the Resurrection.

The glory of what I saw is beyond the imagination of man and defies description.

Then, Brother Cherry led me to a large field which appeared to be burning, and he said, "Look!" I looked, and again I heard the sound of many trumpets, and immediately I saw many personages coming out of the burning field as beautifully clothed as those that had arisen from the sea. Again, I saw the heavens open, and I witnessed the uniting of the souls and bodies of those who had perished by fire. Again, I saw the bodies take on a greater splendor as the souls united with them.

Brother Cherry then led me to a place where I heard the growling of many beasts as though they were in the act of feeding. Again, I heard the sound of the trumpets; and coming from the terrible noise, I saw many personages beautifully clothed as those I had seen before. I saw the heavens open and the souls and bodies reunite.

Then, Brother Cherry led me to a place that resembled a large cemetery, and said, "Look!"

Again, I heard the glorious sound of many trumpets; and the graves opened up, and out of them arose personages that were gloriously arrayed as those I had seen before. Once more, I saw the heavens open with the souls descending and reuniting with the bodies.

Overcome with the glory that I beheld and not understanding what I saw, I turned to Brother Cherry and said, "This is too great for me, how can this be?" He replied, "As God created man's seed to procreate and reproduce himself, so death, no matter where one meets it, whether in the sea, or by fire, or devoured by wild beasts, or buried in the earth, leaves its seed. And in the Resurrection brought about by Jesus Christ, Our Lord, the immortal body comes forth and is reunited with the soul. Remember this, death is not really an end, but the sowing of a beginning."

As he spoke, I received a glimmer of understanding as to this great phenomenon, and yet I am unable to put it in words.

He saw my perplexity and said, "There are no words in the vocabulary of mortal man that can describe what you saw. Hence, the reason why I have used the word "seed." To mortal man the body appears to be destroyed and crumble to dust, but death leaves a seed from which the mortal body arises, immortal and glorious."

Then, he took me back under the tree that I had first seen. As I looked at this beautiful tree, I noticed that there was a fruit hanging from its branches that was different than any I had ever seen. Its color was of the purest white. I also saw that a stream of water ran along side of the tree with water that was crystal clear. In the center of the stream, there was a steel rod about an inch in diameter that led right up to the tree. As I looked at all this, with the understanding coming to me little by little, Brother Cherry said, "Yes, Brother Jim, this is the tree that Lehi and Nephi saw, which represents the Love of God, shed abroad in the hearts of the children of men."

I looked at Brother Cherry and asked, "May I taste of its fruit?" He smiled and said, "You may, but remember this, many times you and the saints have tasted of the fruit of God's love when you have permitted the Holy Spirit to prevail in your hearts." I plucked one of the fruit and tasted it; and as I did, my whole being was filled with a glory and a love that I have never felt before. Suddenly, I wished that my family and all the saints could taste of this fruit; and immediately, I saw my wife, my children, my grandchildren, and their children standing around me partaking of this fruit. I also saw many saints and their families under the tree partaking of its fruit. The joy I felt was indescribable.

Many brothers and sisters, as they ate the fruit, would cry out in Hosanna to the Lord. I noticed a group standing together under one of the branches. I beheld that they were beautifully clothed in white garments and that they were perfectly formed. I asked Brother Cherry, "Who are those so perfect and beautiful?" He replied, "These are they who on

earth were abnormally afflicted but in the Resurrection are perfect."

I looked at them again, and I was given to recognize some. I recognized Brother Louis Parravano's daughter, Brother Ernest Schultz' granddaughter, Brother Sam Kirschner's son, and Brother Nick Pietrangelo's son. They looked at me and waved to me. How beautiful they were!

Looking again at Brother Cherry I asked, "How can the Church prosper more than it has, and when?" Instead of Brother Cherry answering, there was suddenly a great light, and in the midst of it stood the Lord Jesus Christ. I saw the field filled with the entire Church. Christ began to speak, saying, "As the oak tree receives its strength only when it sheds its leaves, so must My Church shed itself of all that is not good. Purify yourselves, oh My people. Cease from all strife, all jealousies, all murmuring, and cause the good that I have put in your hearts to blossom forth in righteousness; for there is good among you; otherwise, I would not have blessed you as I have from time to time. Love

one another as I have loved you. And when you shall do this, I will shake the heavens and the earth for your sake; and the world will know that you are My betrothed and My beloved." Then, He raised His hands in benediction and cried out, "Believe this. I Am that I Am, and I shall fulfill my promises in you."

He then disappeared, and I was left alone with Brother Cherry. He continued to converse with me on many things. Some of the things I do not recall. Some, I cannot reveal. In the midst of our conversation he said, "Tell Brother Alma and Brother Thurman that I shall greet them at the Portals of Paradise when they lay their bodies at rest on earth."

I asked him, "When shall this be?"

He told me, but this is one of the things that was taken from my mind. He smiled at me and said, "Be content with what you have seen and heard, for few have been blessed of God to see and hear that which has been unfolded to you. Remember this, time and circumstances are known



only to God and to whom He wishes to reveal them."

I noticed that while he was speaking, he would put his head to one side slightly; and his hand would move up and down the buttons of his coat, as though in deep concentration. Finally, I said to him, "Brother Cherry, there are some burdens upon me at this time; won't you please ask God to bless me?" When I said this, he laid his hands upon my head; and as he did so, I felt my entire being enveloped in a joy so pure and holy as to render me incapable of transmitting this in words.

He prayed, "Almighty God, comfort and bless Thy servant whom Thou lovest."

Many other words he uttered which are very personal to me and which I shall treasure forever in my heart. When he finished praying, he removed his coat and placed it on my shoulders; saying, "Take my coat for it will keep you warm, because where you are on earth, the weather is not as nice as here." At this, my experience ended.

## MORE BLESSINGS IN FLORIDA

Many have been the blessings that God has bestowed upon me while laboring in His Vineyard. When we moved to Florida, I had a great desire to visit Brother Billy Tucker and his wife, Ruth. They had been away from the Church about twenty years. When my wife and I visited them, we were received with much warmth and gladness.

We continued to visit them on an average of twice a month, with a hope in our hearts that they would return to the fold and family of Christ. Several brothers and their wives came with us from time to time. I cannot remember all of them, but I do recall some. They were Brother Chuck Smith and his wife, Brother Louis Pandone and his wife, and others. We would alternate automobiles with Brother Pandone.

Finally, the day came when Brother Billy decided to come back to Church. I baptized him with great joy in my heart, for I knew his capabilities, desires, and calling. After him, several others were baptized, and soon a mission was organized

in Tampa. In a few years, the mission was organized as a branch.

Others began the trek to that area, and at this date there is another branch in Forest Hills with a beautiful building in which to worship Almighty God. Slowly, the Tampa Branch grew in numbers and in the Spirit of the Lord. Florida is now blessed with several new church buildings, where the Lord has placed His name.

It is a well-known fact that when people work together in the service of the Lord, great things are accomplished. Difficulties are overcome by faith and determination. God works the same today as he did in yesteryears. Give Him the best of labors, and he will return the effort with a hundredfold of blessings. Walk a mile towards Him, and He will walk a thousand miles towards you. What a wonderful God we serve!

## A MIRACLE IN TAMPA

Among those we baptized were two wonderful people, Brother and Sister Turner. They had a little son who had a deterioration of his hipbones. He became so afflicted that he could not walk except with crutches. The doctors told the parents that the boy would never walk again. The Turners brought him to Church one Sunday to have him anointed. I anointed the boy, asking God to condescend in His mercy and heal him. The following Sunday when we visited Tampa, Sister Turner asked me, "Do you want to see what God has done to my little boy?" Then she called her son, whom I had anointed, and there to my utter amazement he came running without crutches. What a sight to behold! God had healed this little boy completely. To this day (after many years), he is completely whole. Praise be to the Almighty.

In process of time, we recommended Brother Billy Tucker to be ordained as an Elder. He was ordained following the General Church Conference. From the day he was ordained, he

worked diligently in the Ministry. He was untiring in his efforts to preach the Gospel and witness for the Lord.

Brother Billy's wife, Ruth, also came back to the Church. I baptized her on the Sunday of our Florida District Conference. This too was an answer to our prayers and a joy to her husband and father-in-law, Brother Joseph Tucker, who lived with them.

We have also had the joy of ordaining Brother Duane Lowe as an Elder and his wife, Betty Ann, as a Deaconess. They too lived in Tampa, formerly of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. They are very wonderful people, who are a great help in Tampa. Their daughter Sandra was baptized also to the happiness of everyone.

The following Sunday before going to our district gathering at Ft. Pierce, I prayed that God would allow one of the Nephites to be in our meeting. During the course of the service while I was preaching, I recited a few of the highlights of the experience I had enjoyed seeing Brother

Cherry, and also of having prayed that one or all three Nephites would visit us in the service. At this juncture, tongues were spoken, and the interpretation was given that the Nephites were with us at the moment. I believe that all present felt the blessings of God at this moment in time. In the afternoon service, one of the sisters testified that she too had prayed that the Nephites would be with us that day.

I presented this experience to the Church, praying that whosoever hears it will feel the glory and the blessing I felt as I received it that night.

I was elected President of the Florida District in 1973 and served in that capacity to the best of my ability. I wish the best for that district (now called the Southeast Region), as I do for every region in the General Church.

Although I am getting older, the desire to serve God and preach the Restored Gospel has not waned but rather increased as the years roll on. I am a firm believer in the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ and in the future blessings

that will attend it. I believe in the prophecies concerning the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth in the flesh, which the Church calls The Peaceful Reign. I believe this shall be fulfilled to the letter as it is written in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

I believe the Book of Mormon to be the revealed Word of God translated from ancient plates by Joseph Smith through the gift and power of God. I believe that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are the two sticks spoken by the prophet Ezekiel in the 37th chapter of his book. I believe that the saints, those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, shall arise from the dead and reign with Christ for a thousand years and shall become Priests and Kings unto the Lord (the First Resurrection) as recorded in the Book of Revelation. I believe that the rest of the dead shall not arise from the grave until after the thousand years (First Resurrection) are ended. One of the greatest works of all time will be done at the

Second Resurrection. I believe in the Word of God as Jesus said, "It is written."

### ANOTHER EXPERIENCE IN FLORIDA

I witnessed many wonderful things in Florida relevant to the manner that God answers prayer. Yet, as the Scriptures tell us, some things must include fasting also.

One day, my wife complained of a severe pain in her hip. No matter what medication she tried, it was to no avail. After three months of suffering, one morning I told her I was going to fast until God answered my prayer. At about 3:00 p.m., she telephoned me at my place of work and told me she had no more pain. I asked her, "What happened?" She replied, "A while ago, I felt as though a hand touched my hip and pulled something out of it, and my pain was gone." What a wonderful blessing we had that day. Needless to say, we glorified God for His tender mercies. God is so good!



## A SHORT TRIP TO AFRICA

While living in Florida, I made a trip to Africa with the purpose of meeting Brothers John Ross and Nephi De Mercurio. I was to meet them in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, visit the Church in Nigeria, and then go to Ghana. I left West Palm Beach Airport and flew to Pittsburgh. I was met by Brother Paul Palmieri, who presented me with a new briefcase as a "bon voyage" gift. From there I boarded a plane for London, England, and stayed overnight at a hotel. As much as I desired to see parts of London, I did not have the opportunity.

I left for Nigeria and arrived at the capital city of Lagos early in the morning. I was scheduled to depart for Port Harcourt at 6:00 a.m., but was not permitted to board the plane until 5:00 p.m. that evening. I soon found out what it means to be in the minority ethnically. I could not get any agent, male or female, to give me any attention. Finally, a young agent took pity on me and let me board the plane. I had been without food since the night I left London.

When I arrived in Port Harcourt, no one was there to meet me. Somehow, the brothers had not been notified of my arrival. Now, I was stranded in a foreign country, alone and uninformed of my whereabouts. I waited for a long time, thinking that probably the brothers had been delayed but would eventually arrive. Waiting was futile.

In desperation, I asked a taxi driver to take me to a hotel. Seeing a white man alone and frustrated, he suggested taking me to another hotel. "Much cheaper," he said. However, I discerned something evil about this man, so I insisted that he drive me to the hotel of my choice. Upon arrival at the hotel, I was told that I had to pay for the three days in advance in United States currency. I did, but it depleted my money. This concerned me, for I had been told that the brothers would furnish me with any needed finances.

I did not rest well that night, for I did not know where to turn. Nonetheless, I decided to search for Brother A.U. Arthur, the president of our Church in Nigeria, as I had been informed he was in the

hospital in Port Harcourt. The next morning while having breakfast, which consisted of a boiled egg and a piece of bread, I was praying that the Lord would direct me. Unexpectedly, a black gentleman, sitting across the room came to my table, introduced himself and asked if he could be of help. Surprised, yet glad to see him; I told him of my predicament.

After hearing my story, he offered his car and chauffeur to drive me to the hospital in search of Brother Arthur. I thanked the gentleman and accepted his offer. I never saw this man again. Surely God had sent him to be of comfort to me.

I was driven to the hospital and looked for the brother, but to no avail. I went back to the hotel feeling quite exhausted physically and emotionally. As I began to climb the stairs leading to the second floor, I looked up; and there appearing like two angels were Brothers Ross and DeMercurio coming down the stairs. We embraced each other warmly and then went to my room, where we knelt in prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord. Unbeknown to

each other, God made it possible for us to meet. For the first time in two days, I had something solid to eat that night.

The next morning I began to feel ill; nonetheless, we boarded the plane to Lagos on our way to Accra, Ghana. Meanwhile, Brother Ross arranged a meeting in our hotel room with some of our African members. We prayed, testified, and sang praises to the Lord. It was a wonderful time spent in worshipping Almighty God. Later we parted from each other asking God's blessings mutually.

The next morning I arose feeling very ill. Brothers John and Nephi arranged to have a young taxi driver take me to the airline ticket office for passage to Accra. While there I got very sick. Consequently, I decided to leave for home. I boarded the plane for London and then New York. From there, I took off for home.

When I arrived at the West Palm Beach Airport, my wife and Brother Chuck and Sister Ilene Smith met me. They could not believe how sick I looked. I

had lost eighteen pounds in four days. Thanks to God, I was nourished back to health in a few weeks.

When I went to the doctor for an examination and told what had happened to me in Africa, he would not touch me. He said he was afraid I had contracted a deadly disease. Nevertheless, he prescribed some medication and told me to see him in a few days. With the Lord's help I recovered completely, but I will never forget that trip to Africa.

### A MIGHTY REVELATION IN SAN CARLOS RESERVATION

In 1970, I attended a special week's meeting of fasting and prayer on the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona. During the course of fasting and praying that week, God showered His blessings abundantly upon those few that were there.

One morning after a few prayers had been offered, the subject of the Peaceful Reign came up

among us. Some in the Church had been led to believe that the Peaceful Reign would start in 1970, and they expected it to do so on January 1, 1970. This was erroneous as the view among many of us was that the Peaceful Reign would have its birth (or start) in 1970. During our conversation, some wondered why there had been no sign of peace on earth if 1970 marked the beginning of the Peaceful Reign. On the spur of the moment, the Lord inspired me to read the account of the creation in the Bible.

When I opened the Bible, I read that the first day of creation ended with the words, "The evening and the morning were the first day," Every subsequent day of creation ended the same way. My mind was immediately enlightened on the subject; and as I read this to the brothers, I told them that the seventh day (or Peaceful Reign Period) has begun in the evening part of the day as in the creation. The brothers present felt the truth of that which God had revealed to me.

Since the seventh day (or year) has begun in the evening part of the day, all the Scripture concerning the wars, rumors of wars, pestilence, destruction, and the pouring out of the seven vials by the Angels shall take place in this evening part of the seventh day. The Peaceful Reign must be considered in the light of a cycle spanning a thousand years rather than a thousand years of actual peace. Towards the dawn of the seventh day, the gathering of the twelve tribes of Israel shall be accomplished, as well as the building of the New Jerusalem by the Seed of Joseph.

While the above may be termed a theory, please note that I have not calendared any events, for only God knows the time when certain prophecies shall be fulfilled.

## GOD REVEALS THE NAMES OF THE THREE NEPHITES TO ME

In 1970, I received a marvelous experience in which the names of the three Nephites were revealed to me.

The following experience was presented at our June 24, 1971, Conference with the following disposition.

"A motion was passed that this experience be studied by the Priesthood and that prayers be offered until the April 1972 Conference in the hope that God will confirm this experience."

One Saturday evening before retiring, I felt an impelling desire to inquire of God concerning the three Nephites who never tasted of death as referred to in the Book of Mormon. I knelt in prayer and asked the Lord the following questions:

- Do they have a place of abode somewhere on the earth to where they retire from time to time?
- Do they have communication with others besides the Lord?



- Since they are in an almost complete immortal state, do they require food as we do?
- Would the Lord see fit to reveal their names?

Sometime after prayer, I lay down to rest; and contemplating on that which I had asked the Lord, I felt myself being carried away in the Spirit. Suddenly before me, I saw a large and beautiful valley with majestic trees dotting it here and there. Grass of the most beautiful green color covered it from end to end. The valley sloped upward gradually; and as I followed its topography, I saw on a plateau the opening of a spacious cavern. Leading up to it, I saw a gently curving path beautifully landscaped on either side. The whole valley was a panorama of Edenic beauty. Immediately and mysteriously, I found myself at the entrance of this cave. Issuing from it, I heard the most beautiful music as though an angelic choir was singing praises to God Almighty.

I looked inside, and there sitting at a fairly large table were three men. They were clothed as in Biblical times. Two of them were beardless, and

their hair reached slightly below the lobes of their ears. The third one had a short beard, and his hair was slightly longer than the others. They appeared to be in deep conversation. I also saw many more in the room; some were younger and some were older. I understood that these were men who had not tasted death, and who had received a partial change also. I saw others and knew at a glance that they were celestial personages who had descended from heaven to converse with these men who had received this quasi-immortal change. I also understood that the former men were persons from various parts of the earth who had known Jesus Christ personally and had been given the gift of not tasting death because of their great works and righteousness. Inwardly, I knew that they would gather from time to time in this cavern to commune with each other and with the messengers of heaven.

As I looked at them in deep humility and awe, I understood that these marvelous men, these truly wonderful saints would be sent forth by God some time during the era of the Peaceful Reign. They

would help the Church and the Ministry in preaching the Gospel in power and glory and also performing great and marvelous works among the children of men. They would be instrumental in bringing tens of thousands to the knowledge of God and Christ. It was as though God was holding the men in reserve for that wonderful time when they would reveal themselves to the world and proclaim the Gospel in great power.

I looked back at the three men sitting at the table and immediately knew they were the three Nephites. They had their hands on the table while they were speaking to each other. I looked at their hands and faces and saw that the skin thereof was translucent, like polished marble, while their eyes and entire countenances had an ethereal beauty beyond description. There was a holiness about them that was awe-inspiring. In them I saw portrayed knowledge, compassion, love, and all the qualities of holy men of God who had known Jesus intimately and had walked and talked with Him. They were saints in every sense of the word. I

was also given to know their names, which are Nephi, Timothy, and Isaiah.

I saw the table laden with food, but it did not appear similar to the food normally eaten. None of them at this time was partaking of it. One of them (one of the beardless ones) arose, and excusing himself from the others, knelt in silent prayer. I understood that he was praying to God for permission to visit someone, somewhere on earth. The Scripture that relates to this incident came to my mind. "And they are as the Angels of God; and if they shall pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus, they can show themselves unto whatsoever man it seemeth them good" (3 Nephi 28:30). Suddenly, I found myself in bed again thanking God for this wonderful experience. Through it all, no one spoke to me nor did I hear any part of their conversation.

## FROM FLORIDA TO CALIFORNIA

In process of time, upon my wife's suggestion, I studied audiology and hearing aid fitting. I received my license to work in that field, which I did until we returned to California.

In the Golden State, specifically Fresno, my wife and I opened a Hearing Aid Office, which was truly blessed by the Lord. After eight years, we sold the business and retired.

Throughout our lives in the Church, God has always provided for my family. Each time we have made a move to help somewhere, we have encountered obstacles that seemed insurmountable; but the Lord has always been good to us. I cannot praise Him enough for His loving-kindness and grace, which He has bestowed upon us. I counsel all missionaries; do not be afraid to work for the Lord. You will meet adversities and obstacles, but God will see you through every one of them.

## MY WIFE'S MIRACULOUS HEALING IN CALIFORNIA

Many years ago my wife developed an ulcer in her stomach. She suffered a lot of pain. Gradually, the ulcer grew larger, and after a complete examination and several x-rays the doctor found that the ulcer was malignant. When we were told that she had cancer, I could not believe it. That dreadful disease had invaded our lives! Again, her doctor had several x-rays taken of her stomach and each one showed the cancer growing larger and larger.

My wife had reached a point in her suffering where she could not drink water without feeling great pain. Shortly afterwards, her doctor recommended surgery. "Not to heal you, Mary," she said, "but simply to ease the pain you're enduring." What a choice! Have surgery to make her life a little less painful or live with the pain until death overtook her. We prayed and fasted for God to give us direction. Since she had not been healed through prayer, we finally decided to go

with surgery. At least the remainder of her days would be more comfortable.

The doctor set a date for Mary's surgery. Waiting for that day was a terrible time for us. We prayed and fasted to touch the heart of God in her behalf, but nothing seemed to work. It appeared that the heavens were impervious to our prayers. We sent for her brother Michael Randazzo, who was a physician in Detroit; and he promised to be with her at the time of her surgery.

Finally, the day for her operation arrived. We went to the hospital and were met by her brother Michael, who attempted to ease her anxieties, but to no avail. Mary was speechless. Her hands were cold as ice. I knew that she was suffering inwardly. The nurses took her to a room and prepared her for surgery. I tried to comfort her but seemed unable to do so. As I held her hands, she said, "Jim, I'm so afraid." My heart sank. Was I going to lose the girl I loved so dearly?

Soon, the nurse came in the room to take her to the operating room. "Nurse," my wife said, "I want to go to the adjoining room."

After a few minutes, she came out and lay on the gurney. I could sense a change in her. She held my hand, and I noticed that her hand was now warm. She said, "Jim, I'm not afraid any longer." She was wheeled into the operating room, where her doctor and assistant were waiting. Michael was there also. He had been given permission to be in the operating room. I bade my wife Godspeed and went into the waiting room, where my children and some relatives were sitting.

I could not stay in the room. I went into the hallway close to the operating room and began to pace the floor from one end to the other, praying continuously.

After a few hours, which seemed like days, her doctor and Michael came to the hallway where we were waiting. Her surgeon began to speak to me saying, "Mr. Lovalvo, I don't know how to tell you



this, but...." I thought with terror in my heart, "He's going to tell me that Mary died."

Michael interrupted him, saying, "Let me tell him."

"Jim," he said, "I have always wanted to see a miracle. I saw one today. When the surgeon opened up Mary's stomach, there was no sign of cancer or ulcer. Her organs were as pink and healthy as a newborn baby. She's well."

"Are you telling me the truth, Michael?"

"Of course, I am. She's well."

In my heart I cried out, "God healed her. Thank you, Lord!"

"When can we see her?" my children and I asked almost simultaneously.

"Soon, very soon," we were told.

When she came out of the recovery room, we went to see her. Although she was still a little groggy, she smiled because she had been told that no ailment had been found in her stomach. With tears and smiles my family surrounded her bed, saying without speaking how glad we were to see

her and know that God had surely answered our prayers.

Later that day, I went home for a little rest, waiting for the evening when I would again visit my wife at the hospital. For some reason, unbeknown to me, I sat at the piano and began to praise the Lord for having healed my wife so miraculously. The words, "How many times has He answered your prayers," came to my mind, and suddenly a melody developed in my mind. I began to play it on the piano. Words and music were given to me, and within an hour I wrote the following hymn.

### "HOW MANY TIMES"

How many times have you wondered,  
Whenever your heartaches distress you,  
When'er your burdens oppress you,  
Does Jesus hear when I pray?

Chorus

How many times has

He answered your prayers?  
How many times has  
He lightened your cares?  
How many times have  
Your sorrows He shared?  
How many wonderful times?

No need to ask when you're lonely,  
When grief and sorrow beset you,  
When things go wrong all about you,  
Does Jesus hear when I pray?

How many times without knowing,  
Gently He guides and He leads you,  
He cares and tenderly loves you,  
Yes! Jesus hears when you pray.

When my wife recovered from her surgery, she was able to eat as well as any healthy person. Praise be to Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ! I shall never forget this glorious miracle. There are no words sufficient to praise Him for His

tender mercies towards my family. God is a living God, full of loving-kindness, whose mercy and love are from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

#### ANOTHER EXPERIENCE INVOLVING ONE OF THE THREE NEPHITES

One day, at one of the California campouts, the ministers felt to hold hands and offer some prayers. While the prayer session was in progress, I heard a sound. Opening my eyes and looking toward the entrance, I saw a man clothed in a beautiful, white flowing garment walking towards the front of the hall. He had an exquisite sash tied around his waist with the two ends hanging down to his knees. Suddenly, I knew it was Nephi. I cannot tell how I knew, but I did. I broke loose from the hands of the brothers on either side of me and walked towards him.

As I reached him, I noticed the same eternal wisdom in his eyes as I had seen so many years ago in the eyes of the man I had helped across

Shoemaker Avenue in Detroit, Michigan. I also noticed that his face had a translucent appearance. I recognized the face of an almost immortal servant of God immediately. I say this because the Book of Mormon states, "And now, whether they were mortal or immortal, from the day of their transfiguration, I know not" (3 Nephi 28:17).

I stretched my arms and embraced him. I thought I felt something solid, but then he smiled and disappeared. I was left wondering whether I really felt his body or not. To this day, I am left in a spiritual euphoria. Whether this was real or merely a vision, I saw Nephi.

Several people attested to this experience. Brother Adam Costarella came up to me and asked me how the man was dressed. After telling him, he said that he too had seen the same thing.

At that campout, our grandchildren were there: Scott, our daughter's son; and, Susan, our son's daughter.

At the moment I saw Nephi, Scott had his leg out in the aisle. He felt that someone was passing and instinctively pulled his leg in.

Susan heard a voice saying, "A messenger of God is passing by."

A few others also testified to having seen or felt the presence of a spiritual personage. It was a wonderful moment of rejoicing when I, and those who witnessed this occurrence, testified about it.

### ANOTHER EXPERIENCE INCLUDING THE THREE NEPHITES

Several years ago, at the General Church Spiritual Conference in April, after I had finished administering the wine to my portion of the congregation and was walking toward the table to deposit the cup; I saw three men attired in ancient garb standing by the piano. I knew they were the three Nephites. Suddenly, I found myself offering the cup of wine to them, but they declined. One of them said, "We are here in spirit. Some day we will

show ourselves to you in person, and we will partake of the Lord's Supper with you." Having said this, they disappeared.

A sister in the back of the sanctuary arose and testified that while the wine was being administered, she saw three men walk down the aisle and stop by the piano. How can I sufficiently praise God for these marvelous experiences? "Who am I," I often ask, "that the Lord would bless me so much?"

## OFF TO A SEMINARY LIFE

In 1985, my wife inspired me to enroll in a seminary. Prior to this, I had attended many night classes in several colleges, taking courses in psychology, writing, English composition, grammar, philosophy, counseling, and anthropology.

After some consideration, I applied to the Pacific University Seminary in Fresno, which accepted me after it had made a thorough

investigation of my credentials. The reason for enrolling in a seminary was to see what subjects were taught and how they could be applied in my spiritual life. I attended the seminary for four years; and in 1989, at the age of 78, I received my Masters Degree in Theology and Pastoral Counseling.

During those four years, I had many hours of counseling in premarital, marital, and victims of crime. They were rough years, as the professors were very tough in grading the students. However, thanks to the Lord, I graduated with a 3.5 average. Also, during my years at the seminary, my wife was required to attend some of the classes with me, especially in those of counseling. In these classes, she surpassed the expectations of the professors. I was very proud of her.

On the day of graduation, my immediate family, extended family, and some members of the Church came to support me. When I went up to the platform to receive my diploma, I was given a standing ovation much to my surprise. Afterwards,



my son, Leonard James, and his wife, Vera, gave me a graduation banquet at their home.

## DARK OCTOBER 1992

The year 1992 was a turning point in The Church of Jesus Christ. This was the year when the Faith and Doctrine concerning remarriage after a divorce was changed. The proposal to change the law was brought on the floor of conference in 1981 and was defeated. It was brought up again in 1984, and again it was defeated. It came up again in 1986 and in 1988, and it was defeated both times. When it was brought up in 1992, the change was effected.

The night before the change (in October 1992), the Lord sent the Apostle Paul to me in a dream who said, "Brother Jim, I too fought against great odds regarding some of the Church's Doctrines and Christ's Commandments; but because I knew who had called me, I continued witnessing as an Apostle for Jesus Christ and His Church until I was

slain. The Lord sent me to tell you to do the same as I.”

This message from heaven fortified my spirit and strengthened my resolve to continue to keep the faith until God calls me to His everlasting home. Nonetheless, I fought a good fight. I was bruised and battered emotionally, but God sustained me throughout the many verbal confrontations on this issue. God will work in His own mysterious ways to hold the Church of His Son as the “standard of the world.”

## HELPING TO WRITE THE GENERAL CHURCH HISTORY

After the office of Church Historian was vacated by Brother Don Curry in the late 1970s, Brothers Dominic Thomas and Nick Pietrangelo (President and First Counselor of the Church) approached me and asked if I would take the office of Historian. I told them that I would be glad to do so. I was willing, but somehow I remained as

Assistant Historian. I was bewildered at the time why I was asked to assume the office and then the nominations stood as given.

I wrote the history of Nigeria, Italy, Argentina, and the Pacific Coast. Others were asked to write about the rest of the districts. Within a few months, I finished my assignment. The history was to be ready for printing within five years. To this date, it is still in limbo.

#### ANNIVERSARY SONGS FOR MY BELOVED WIFE

For our twenty-fifth anniversary, I wrote a song for my wife entitled:

##### “TIL THE END OF LIFE”

As the highest mountain,  
As the deepest ocean,  
As a flowing fountain,  
My love is strong and true.  
As a breath of spring  
When breezes gently whisper,

Soft and sweet and tender,  
My love song, my dear to you.

Chorus

Til the end of life,  
We'll walk the path of love  
Together.  
Not for days or years,  
But until death our life shall sever.  
Til the sun grows cold,  
The stars are cold, my love will hold,  
Eternally, my song shall be,  
I love you truly dear.

Darling, through the years,  
Your love is still so warm and tender,  
In your heart so true,  
I find a full and sweet surrender.  
Still the thrill of you,  
Is always new and just as true,  
In joy and tears,  
Through passing years,

I'll always love you, dear.

For our twenty-seventh anniversary, I wrote another song for my darling wife entitled:

“YOU ARE THE ONE I LOVE”

The trees have the breeze

To caress them,

Birds have the skies above,

But I have you, my darling,

You are the one I love.

The Spring has the rain for its flowers,

Summer has sunshine's love,

But I have you, my darling,

You are the one I love.

Kings have their thrones

And their castles,

Treasures of silver and gold,

You are my fairest of treasures,

To have and to hold.

The day has the sun for its lover,

Night has the moon above,

But I have you, my darling,  
 You are the one I love.

### HYMNS I HAVE WRITTEN

I wrote several hymns for the Church. Two hymns are in the *Saints Hymnal*, and the other hymns are in the *Saints Favorites*. They are as follows:

- “Marching On The King’s Highway”
- “How Long Wilt Thou Forget Me, Lord”  
 (taken from Psalm 5)
- “The Red Man Sat Proudly”  
 (Lyrics by Catherine Poma)
- “What a Marvelous Work and Wonder”  
 (Lyrics by Ether M. Furnier)
- “Lo! A Mighty Angel Flying”
- “The Centennial”
- “How Many Times”
- “I’ll Follow Thee”

- I also wrote the music to the 23rd Psalm (it is not in any hymnal).

## BOOKS I HAVE WRITTEN

The Lord has blessed me in many ways. He has inspired me in preaching the Gospel, in teaching the Word of God, in writing many Articles for the Church's paper, *The Gospel News*, and in writing several books. For all this, I give God and His Son all the praise and honor; for without Jesus Christ, I could do nothing, absolutely nothing.

Up to this writing, I have written the following books:

- *It is Written: Truth Shall Spring From the Earth*
- *History of Baptism*
- *A Dissertation on the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ*
- *Book of Mormon: Truth in Perspective*
- *It is Written: Articles of Religious Insights*

- *My Autobiography, entitled: I Can Hear my Savior Calling*

I have also written the following short theses:

- *In Defense of the Book of Mormon*
- *The Sabbath Day*
- *Fasting and Prayer (in association with Robert A. Watson and Joseph Loyalvo)*

If the Lord gives me health, strength, and inspiration, I shall continue to write, not only for this generation but for future generations as well. Everything I do is for the honor and glory of the Lord. My dependence has always been on God's Holy Spirit regardless of the task I undertake: whether it is preaching, teaching, writing, counseling, or anything the Lord inspires me to do. For without Him I can do nothing. Everything I do is for His honor and glory.



## OUR FIRST TRIP TO ITALY

In December 1983, we sold our Hearing Aid Office, and we retired income-earning labor. In 1984, my wife and I took our first trip to Italy. We went on a tour of several places in Italy and then started our work for the Church. We arrived in Cosenza, where we were met by Brother Giuseppe Buonofiglio, an Evangelist and Presiding Elder of the branch in San Demetrio Corone.

We traveled by bus approximately forty miles before we arrived in that little town. On the way, I started a conversation with the bus driver who was a former resident of Brooklyn, New York, but decided to return to Italy with his family. I told him who we were and why we had come to Italy. I told him of the Apostasy and Restoration until we reached San Demetrio Corone. He and his teenage son promised to attend church services as they lived in that town.

As we entered San Demetrio, we were struck with its ancient atmosphere. Two thousand years stood before us. Churches, houses, and buildings

were ancient, with the exception of a modern house and building here and there, standing out like "sore thumbs." It was, nevertheless, breathtaking. We could not help but admire the scenery and people.

The driver let us off at the brother's house, where we were met by his wife who greeted us warmly. It seemed as though we had known each other for years. That is what the Gospel of Jesus Christ does to people. No matter where one goes--throughout the world--one finds a warm love and reception in the members of the Church. Sister Buonofiglio prepared a dinner for us; and after some time conversing with them, the subject of retiring for the night arose.

They were a little crowded for space, so we chose to stay in the basement of the small church building. There were two single beds, clean linen, a small electric burner to cook from, and a rest room. There was no convenience for a shower. Mary and I made the best of the situation and went to bed. The next day, we bathed with wash cloths we had

brought with us and had our first breakfast in San Demetrio, consisting of bread, cereal, and milk.

We spent most of the day cleaning the basement, mopping the floor, and trying to make it a habitable place. We spent one week in that basement. Thanks to God, we did not suffer any untoward effects from the dampness. The tiny electric stove the brother had provided for us would short the breaker periodically, even in the night, and I had to run upstairs to reset it. Nonetheless, we survived wonderfully by the Grace of God.

We had no form of transportation; we walked to the members' homes. We met Brother Salvatore Oliva, an Elder of the Church, and his wife, who greeted and treated us cordially. They owned two very modern apartment houses across from each other. Brother Oliva said that he had built them for his children and grandchildren. We had several visits with them during our stay in San Demetrio. We were also invited to have dinner with them a few times.

We visited the entire group, walking each step of the way. We also met Brother Buonofiglio's daughters and their husbands. Everyone was overly cordial, welcoming us with "open arms." We spoke continually about the Church and its future expectations wherever we went. We had two meetings with the members: Wednesday evening and on the following Sunday. It was a joy to be with the brothers and sisters but a deep sadness when we departed from them.

During our stay in San Demetrio Corone, we became acquainted with a wonderful woman, Anna Ventresca. She lived in a beautiful apartment across the street from the small church. As we would emerge from the basement of the church, she would always greet us with a smile and a warm "buon giorno" (good day). One day she invited us to have a "bichiere" with her. In Italian, that means to have a small glass of wine. We declined, telling her that we did not drink. "Well, have a cup of coffee or tea with me," she said.

We accepted the invitation and were admitted into her home, which was gorgeously furnished. She served some tea and put some delicious homemade pastries before us. She made us feel as though we had been friends for decades. She inquired about us, and we told her who we were and why we had come there. During the conversation, we were informed that she was a widow for many years and that her son was an officer of high standing in the police department (the Carabinieri).

At one point, we asked her why she had invited two strangers into her home. Turning to my wife, she said, "There's something about you that is different than all of the other Americans who visit here. You're so genteel looking and kind."

Before we left, she invited us to have dinner with her the following Friday evening. Accordingly, we went there on Friday and were served one of the best home cooked dinners we had ever eaten during our stay in Italy. The dinner was delightful, but soon the conversation turned to

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We spoke at length to her about the Church, inviting her to attend the services. No promises were made, but she said that she wanted to be friends with us. Her last words were, "When you come back, I want you to stay with me." It is sad that we never had an opportunity to visit this friendly woman again. Finally, the day came when amid tearful embraces, we bade all the members farewell. We promised that we would return to visit them again.

Although the occasion to visit this graceful lady did not happen, we remember her in prayer with a hope that some of our ministers will get in touch with her. Opportunities to witness for the Lord are many in Italy. All we need is someone to stay there a year or more, and I am certain there will be success in preaching the Gospel. Truly the Lord said that we need laborers to work for Him. May the Lord provide laborers in Italy, for it is a fertile field in which to sow the seed of the Gospel.

## A HEALING IN PALERMO, SICILY

On our first trip to Italy, my wife and I visited the different places where the church members lived and enjoyed a wonderful season of fellowship with them. Afterwards, we visited my biological brother's family in Palermo. My brother Mitchell died in Italy while in his late forties but raised a wonderful family of four boys and a girl. One of my nephews (Franco) and his wife met us at the Palermo Airport and presented my wife with a dozen long-stemmed roses. (I will write more on our trips to Italy elsewhere.)

While staying at my niece Rosetta's home, she told me about her neighbor's daughter who was afflicted with a strange disease diagnosed as incurable. She asked if I would go with her and pray for the girl. My wife and I went with her one morning; and when we arrived, we saw a very sick girl bundled up with a heavy blanket and a grieving mother trying to comfort her.

My niece introduced my wife and me and told the girl's mother that I was a minister from

America; and if she agreed, I would pray for her daughter. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she acquiesced, saying, "Please ask the Lord to help my baby."

I anointed the girl with oil, laid my hands upon her, and prayed with all my heart that God would, in His great mercy and love, heal this disease-ridden girl. After prayer, we left. The next day, my niece told us that the girl was well and eating as though she had never been sick. For that, we praised the Lord and do praise Him for His loving-kindness and mercy.

## MY VISITS TO INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

Several years ago, The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, commonly known as RLDS, initiated a change in its doctrine permitting women to be ordained into its priesthood. This created an emotional and psychological problem among many members.



There were resentment, anger, disappointment, sadness, and frustration.

When this news reached our Church, the Quorum of Seventy thought that this problem would open the door for a bit of proselytizing by introducing our Church to the dissatisfied groups.

Consequently, on May 22, 1985, Evangelists Anthony R. Lovalvo, Joseph Calabrese, and Sam Dell visited Independence as a fact-finding group. They visited and spoke to several people, and while doing so, met a certain Dr. David Clark who welcomed them in his home. That visit developed into a friendly relationship and eventually meetings began to be scheduled.

These brothers, as well as others, worked very diligently in the attempt to promulgate our Church in that area. They had some success in that many people opened their doors and listened to what was being taught by the various brothers who visited the Independence area. In process of time, some of the folks in that area wanted to meet some

of our Apostles. Because of that, I was invited to go to Independence.

It was a cold winter day when I went there. I was taken to a hotel; and when I arose the next morning and was showering, I slipped in the bathtub and felt as though I had broken every bone in my body. But by the grace of God, I was unhurt.

Outdoors the walks were icy and slippery, which made walking very difficult. Nonetheless, I met with Dr. Clark with whom I soon developed a modicum of religious rapport. To his credit, I want to add that he seemed well versed in the Restoration history.

The night of my arrival I spoke to a congregation of approximately forty people. They were very attentive; and at the end of the meeting, the first question most of them asked me was, "How long are you going to stay here?" I could not answer that question, but told them that some of us would be visiting them periodically.

At one time, I visited that area with my wife and stayed with my brother Tony and his wife, Anne, in the house next door to the Clarks, which our Church had remodeled. I noticed that my brother was on the phone constantly inviting people to attend our evening Church meetings.

At one time, while conversing with David Clark, he sadly said to me, "Brother Jim, when I am ready, I want you to baptize me." While I was glad to hear this, I had my doubts that his wife would ever agree to his conversion to our Church. Time proved this to be a sorrowful fact.

The time I spent there preaching the Gospel I do not regret as we met some nice people. I must say that our meetings were well attended. But again, after each meeting the same question would be asked, "How long are you going to stay?" This question proves that when missions are attempted, one has to take residence in that area.

With all the attempts made by many brothers, nothing developed in that area. Eventually, Brother Charles Smith and his wife, Ilene, moved

near Independence, holding meetings in their home. Although there have been no conversions, the Smiths have made a few friends. They're still trying. May God bless them.

#### MY BROTHER ANTHONY'S DEMISE

Heart-rending news that I received a few years ago was the death of my youngest brother, Anthony. Throughout his eighty years, we had an exceptional relationship, one of mutual respect. I don't recall ever exchanging a harsh word. We may have differed on some things, minor in substance, but always with respect for each other. He was married to a wonderful girl, Anne Thomas, and had two beautiful children, Leonard and Roseanne.

When we moved to California, we corresponded every week. One week he would call me, and the following week, I would call him. This went on for years. Whenever I visited Detroit, Michigan, I would stay at his home, where I was

treated royally. Even now as I write, I miss him so much.

Before going to his funeral, I composed the following poem that reflected the way I felt about him. I think it is apropos that I include it in my autobiography.

“HE WAS MORE THAN A BROTHER”

In Memory of My Beloved Brother,

Anthony R. Lovalvo

Many were the hours we spent together,  
 Speaking of Jesus without end.  
 And often, we'd pray and praise God together.  
 For he was more than a brother,  
 He was my friend.

“Hi there, Pal,” came his voice on the phone.  
 Vibrant and filled with affection.  
 And I would respond with joy and laughter.  
 For he was more than a brother,  
 He was my friend.

Then came the day when his voice grew weaker,  
No longer laughing without end.

    Weeping I'd pray,  
    "Lord, his suffering please alter.  
For he was more than a brother,  
    He was my friend.

Though stilled was his voice, I'll never forget

    His love, precious without end.  
And in my fondest reveries I will remember,  
    That he was more than a brother,  
    He was my friend.

Down memory's lane, I still hear him say,

    "Hi there, pal, how are you today?"  
"Fine," I would respond, "I'll see you later,  
    Where heaven and eternity blend."  
For he was more than a brother,

    He was my friend.

With my brother Anthony's death, all that is  
left of my parent's family, consisting of ten

children are Joseph and I. Joseph is twenty-two months older than I am. He has been an Apostle for sixty-two years and President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles for many years. Joseph was ninety-two years old on March 1, 2002, and has enjoyed excellent health all those years. He has also experienced many blessings in his Ministry, which will make interesting and enjoyable reading when he writes his memoirs.

## OUR SECOND TRIP TO ITALY

On the trip to Italy, my wife and I spent a lot of time visiting San Demetrio Corone, Buccino, Villa San Giovanni, Naples, and Sardegna. Brother Alex Gentile from Detroit, Michigan, met us in San Demetrio; and together we visited the members, enjoying the blessings of God. We traveled to Buccino, where we were greeted warmly by Brother and Sister Magaldi. We saw the little church where the brother held services. It was small and quaint, but serviceable. Before we left,

we gave Brother Magaldi \$500 to make some repairs to the church. We returned to San Demetrio Corone; and after a short stay, we went to Villa San Giovanni. With Brother Morgante, we visited some members, encouraging them to "keep the faith." They are few in membership but still holding fast to the Church. Brother Morgante was a great help to us. Later Brother Gentile left for home.

Two days later, my wife and I boarded the train to Naples. Upon arriving there, we were met by Brother Mario De Gaetano, who greeted us warmly. Brother Mario took us to his villa, which was situated near the ocean. It is a beautiful home with marble floors and decorated very tastefully. We were treated like royalty. His wife, though not yet a member of the Church, was very warm and hospitable. She made us feel like close friends or relatives. The few days we spent with them were blessed indeed. When we left, it was amid tears and promises to "see each other" again.

Our next stop was to Sardegna. Brother Stefano Romano and his wife, Immacolata, met us at the



airport; and though we had never met, there was an instant rapport between us. The Romanos greeted us as though they had known us for years. It was wonderful to see the same love of God displayed by them as the folks in America. After a few hours drive during which we became acquainted with this wonderful couple, we arrived in Cala Gonone. They escorted us into their beautiful home, which was situated close to the beaches. In a short while, we were sitting at their table eating a delicious dinner prepared by Sister Immacolata.

During our stay with the Romanos, we visited the other members in the city, holding meetings with them. We spent a wonderful week in Cala Gonone, conversing continuously about the Gospel and the Faith and Doctrine of our Church. Finally, the day came when we had to part from one another, and as usual it was mixed with tears of love for each other. We promised that we would return soon. Hopefully, God will grant us the pleasure of seeing these affectionate people again.

We were taken to the airport by the Romanos, and again, our goodbyes were sad. How wonderful is the love that the Lord places in the hearts of the saints, regardless of the geographical distances that separate them.

#### OUR THIRD TRIP TO ITALY

On September 14, 1986, my wife and I arrived at Villa San Giovanni, Reggio Calabria. We were met by Brother Giovanni Morgante, who greeted us very warmly. He was an Elder of The Church of Jesus Christ stationed at Villa San Giovanni. (Brother Morgante died shortly after our third trip to Italy.) After we placed our luggage in the hotel room, we conversed a while and then went out for dinner.

During our conversation regarding the status of Church members, he told us that Brother LoRicco's present wife had not attended any Church meetings since his marriage to her (about a year). Also, there was quite a bit of dissatisfaction

because their marriage was not performed by any of the Italian ministers.

On Sunday morning, Brother LoRicco met us; and since there was no time for any discussion, we went to Church. I opened the service with a text from the Book of Mormon. Afterwards, Brothers LoRicco and Morgante spoke a little followed by the testimonies of the few brothers and sisters who were present. Altogether, it was a blessed meeting.

After the service, we went to a restaurant for lunch, and while dining I asked Brother LoRicco to stay a while. I wanted to talk with him concerning the forthcoming conference, but he excused himself saying he had an important errand that needed his attention. He invited us to visit him in Patti, where he lives; and I told him that if Brother Morgante would take us, we would go to his home. However, since Brother Morgante was moving back to Villa San Giovanni, it was not possible to go to his home.

On Tuesday, September 17, 1986, my wife and I left for Rome, where we met up with Brother Mario

Onorato from Windsor, Canada. He had promised to drive us around Italy in his car. He had purchased this car the prior year and left it in care of his cousin in Rome. When we met him in Rome, he appeared like an angel to us. Without a doubt, God had touched the heart of this brother to volunteer his services in Italy. Otherwise, it would have been difficult, as strangers, to travel around that country. However, we had faith in the Lord that we would have managed somehow.

Brother Mario took us to his cousin's house, where we were treated very hospitably. After dinner, they took us to a pensione, where we spent the night. In the meanwhile, Brother Mike LaSala from Detroit, Michigan, met us in Rome and expressed his desire to go with us to the Island of Ponza. I was indeed happy to hear this.

The next morning, along with Brothers Onorato and LaSala, we boarded the ferry to Ponza. It was a beautiful ride: calm seas and warm weather. We arrived in Ponza and were overcome by the beauty of that Island. It was truly amazing, a beautiful

piece of architecture built by the Master Artist, Our Lord.

Brother Mario took us to his sister's house, where we were welcomed with open arms and open affection. Her name is Marissa Onorato. We could see the abundant love of God in her. She is also a member of our Church. She is truly a wonderful person. While in Ponza, she provided us with all the comforts of home. She cooked for us and treated us as her own flesh and blood.

Sister Marissa lived on the third floor of a multi-house complex. We had to climb seventy-four stone steps, each one a different height from the other. Some were about four inches high, and some were approximately ten inches high. This we did for several days, two or three times daily.

The next day, Thursday, September 19, 1986, we visited Brother Pietro Mazzella, a young member of our Church and also an erstwhile Elder. I wanted to see for myself why this man had given up his license. When we met, Brother Mazzella and his wife welcomed us very cordially. In

conversation with him, he told us his side of the story, which was quite lengthy. (This is all on tape.)

Brother Pietro told us that his license had been revoked for quite awhile by Brother Giuseppe LoRicco. Whether true or not, he said that from the day he had been called as a minister he had never been taught about the Book of Mormon nor the Restoration of the Gospel. This was difficult to believe as many ministers from America had visited Ponza.

Pietro also told us that there were Elders of the Church in Ponza who were practicing “witchcraft and magical arts.” This news stunned us. He said that one of these men was Brother Attilio Romano (who was the biological brother of the late Brother John Romano, who lived in Dearborn, Michigan).

Note: Upon investigation, this accusation was proved to be false.

Pietro told us that he could not accept the Book of Mormon as his faith was centered on the Bible. I attempted to explain the Book of Mormon; and after a lengthy conversation, I asked him if we

could visit with him again. He replied in the affirmative.

On Friday morning, we fasted and prayed for several hours in the home of Sister Marissa, asking God to touch that young man that he might return to the Church because he said the thing that drew him when he was baptized was the love of God. This young man has a nice personality that apparently attracts other young people.

We also prayed that the Lord would reveal the truth of the Book of Mormon and the Faith of the Church to the members in Ponza. There is a need of learned ministers in that island who are conversant with the Apostasy and Restoration of the Gospel, and who have the ability to impart this knowledge to others by the power of the Holy Spirit.

On Friday, September 20, 1986, as we fasted and prayed, we felt the presence of Almighty God. Everyone felt the touch of the Holy Spirit in each prayer. While Sister Marissa Onorato was reading a passage of scripture from the Book of Mormon, I saw a personage standing between her and my

wife, smiling, as though he was accepting what we were doing.

Brother Mario Onorato had a vision in which he saw the Twelve Apostles of our Church, and they seemed united, all in one accord. He also saw Brother Mike LaSala, as it were, preaching to many people. After the fast and prayer service, we left to visit some of the brothers and sisters.

This Island of Ponza, in my estimation, could be a very fertile ground for establishing the Church if men were sent of spiritual stature: founded and grounded in all the phases of the Apostasy and Restoration. Some Elders in Italy are not conversant with the basic Doctrine of the Church. They are good men, but they need someone to help them, just as we do in America. There is a necessity to staff the respective missions with ministers from America who would be a tremendous help in Italy.

Note: After our trips to Italy and at this writing, some of our ministers from America have gone to Italy and continued to indoctrinate and encourage the Elders and members to “keep the Faith.”



On Friday night, we visited Pietro Mazzella, again, with the hope that we could be used of God to convince him of the Book of Mormon. After many hours of conversation, he did not appear to be any more convinced than he was the day before. Pietro's complaint is also that the brothers from America did not tell him much about the Restoration and the Book of Mormon. I was somewhat perplexed at this because I feel certain that our brothers from America who visited here from time to time must have instructed him in our Faith. Nonetheless, I felt sorry for this young man, as he appears to be very sincere. His wife seems to be more genuinely interested in the Church than he. I believe that she would hold steadfast to our Faith if her husband were grounded solidly in the Faith of our Church.

A Pentecostal minister, of about thirty years of age, has somehow gotten in touch with Pietro and convinced him and a few others against the Book of Mormon and some of our Doctrine. This minister

goes every Saturday and stays with the Mazzellas, holding meetings with them.

We returned to Marissa's home with some of the folks feeling a little discouraged. However, we trusted that God would work with Pietro and the others to return to the Church. He promised to come to church Sunday.

On Saturday, September 21, 1986, we went to the church to fast and pray and also to clean it preparatory to Sunday's meeting. On the way, we picked up Sister Concetta, who is a Deaconess in Ponza.

She is a very nice person and founded in the Faith. After the prayer service, we cleaned the church. The building was large enough for about forty people. The members, including Brothers Pietro Mazzella and Mario Onorato, added a toilet the year before and also laid tiles on the floor and on the sides of the wall. We all worked very hard cleaning the church to make it presentable.

In the afternoon, we went to visit Pietro again because he had informed us that the young

Pentecostal minister was going to be there. Brothers' Mario Onorato, Mike LaSala, and I spoke with this Pentecostal minister for several hours, but it was difficult to convince him of our Faith. We asked him questions that he was unable to answer. He has a humble appearance and talks with a subdued voice.

I think that is what convinced Pietro and the others. A sister of our Church spoke to me after our session and said that there was no difference between our Church and the Pentecostal, according to the explanation this minister gave them.

I discerned that our people in Ponza have not received any extended indoctrination of our Faith. We have lost about six members since Pietro's license was taken away. If we had a minister in Ponza, we could have easily offset the encroachment of this young Pentecostal minister. Again, I say that there is a need of a couple of our ministers who can help keep these members alive spiritually.

The members in Ponza had not participated in the ordinance of feet washing for months. The Deaconess told me that she did not remember the last time they had this ordinance. Those people were without Communion or feet washing for a long time. "Tomorrow," I thought, "God willing, we are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper and have feet washing."

On Sunday, September 22, 1986, we went to Church. Surprisingly, Pietro Mazzella was there. We had a very good meeting in preaching and in the fellowship service. Afterwards, I administered the Lord's Supper, and then we went into the ordinance of feet washing. It was a wonderful meeting. All the members took part in testifying and in the two ordinances. After the meeting, I asked Brother Pietro Mazzella if he would come to the conference in Villa San Giovanni, but his answer was rather negative. I understand that Brother Mike LaSala left him sufficient funds to come to the conference. Brother LaSala left Sunday night with a promise that he would meet us in Villa

San Giovanni. (As it turned out, he could not attend the conference.)

On Monday, September 23, 1986, Brother Mario Onorato, his sister Marissa, my wife, and I boarded the ship and returned to Rome. We went to Brother Geppino Romano's home, where we were welcomed very cordially and given a delicious dinner. Sister Marissa stayed in Rome because she was going for some medical tests. That evening we left to board the ship to Sardegna.

The cabins on the ship were small with two sets of three-tiered bunks. Because of that, Brothers Onorato, Romano, and I sat in large chairs attempting to sleep, but we only caught a few winks. It was indeed a long night, but thanks to God we made it to Sardegna. Upon arriving the next morning, we drove to Brother Stefano Romano's home (no relation to Brother John Romano), where we were welcomed very warmly. Brother Stefano's wife, Immacolata, prepared a wonderful lunch for us. The love of God was apparent in those two members. Afterwards,

Brother Stefano took us to the marina, where he has his boats. He and his two sons use these boats to take visitors up and down the sea during vacation periods. Cala Ganone is a resort town, and it gets hundreds of vacationers during the summer months. That evening we stayed at their house.

The next day, we had a Church service where we met most of the members. We had a very nice service, and I also administered the Lord's Supper. My wife was asked to set the table for the Lord's Supper everywhere we went. The Deaconesses wanted to see how she prepared the table. They received her and her instructions with great respect. Their testimonies were beautiful and filled with love and sincerity. The members in Italy are very warm and lovable. Their hearts opened up to us as though they had known us for a long time. They have the same kind of love that we find among our people in America. Sister Immacolata Romano appears to be a very spiritual person. Her heart is completely in the Church. I believe that she is the mainstay of the Church in Sardegna.

I found Brother Romano had a greater understanding of the Bible than of the Book of Mormon, but that is understandable. We have no one in Italy who can teach the Restoration of the Gospel and the Book of Mormon. His sincerity, however, cannot be doubted. His wife believes in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon without question. All the members in Italy need help. Some minister(s) from America should stay for at least six months and instruct every member in the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ. If this is not done, we may lose what few members we have.

To Brother Stefano's credit, I must say that when we were discussing "that Elders should abstain from smoking and be role models of righteousness," he rose to the occasion and cited Scripture to substantiate his concurrence with the Church's views on the subjects discussed. While in Sardegna, Sister Immacolata Romano related two dreams, which I asked her to write and present to the Italian Conference. Accordingly, the brothers at

the conference voted to forward these dreams to the General Church in America. Again, I repeat, unless we send missionaries to Italy that remain for at least six months or more, the work there is going to diminish. It is really a shame because the potential is great.

That evening, we boarded the ship for Rome. Brother and Sister Romano came with us. The next morning, Thursday, September 26, 1986, we boarded the train for Villa San Giovanni. While on the train, I was delighted to see my wife and Sister Immacolata engaged in conversation about the Gospel with a woman who appeared to be very wealthy. Brother Stefano Romano also initiated a conversation with a woman about the Church.

Brother Mario Onorato sat next to an old gentleman with whom he struck up a conversation regarding the Book of Mormon. Shortly, he called me to his seat and asked me to explain the Book of Mormon a little more in detail. I found the old gentleman to be very learned. We eventually traded addresses, and I promised to send him a



Book of Mormon (English and Italian); he reads both languages. Truly, the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

We arrived in Villa San Giovanni tired but grateful to God for His blessings and for being with us wherever we had been. We met some brothers and sisters who had already arrived. Some came from Naples and some from Buccino. It was truly exciting to see the Italian saints.

Those whom we had met the year before literally opened their arms, embracing us in the love of God. They welcomed us to Italy and the conference. Others were coming the next day (Friday). Brother Rosario Scravaglieri from Modena could not come. I spoke with him by telephone. He sounded so very friendly. He regretted not being with us because he was not able to get excused from military duty.

Brother LoRicco met us on Thursday evening, and after dinner Brother Mario Onorato, Brother Mario Di Gaetano (from Naples) and his aunt, my wife, and I went to see the rooms he had reserved

for all of us. The rooms we viewed were not acceptable, so I counseled him to make reservations at the hotel where my wife and I were staying. I also told him to make reservations at another restaurant that was better suited for the members. I wanted the brothers and sisters served in a clean, hospitable place. Accordingly, he made arrangements at another hotel and restaurant.

During that day, Brother Morgante told me that they held only two meetings a month in Villa San Giovanni and that the rent was going to be raised to 100,000 lire a month starting on the first of the year. He said that if they do not get any help from the Church in America, they would neither be able to pay the 80,000 lire monthly that they are now paying nor the 100,000 lire on the first of January.

He also suggested that the meeting place in Villa San Giovanni should probably be moved to another town, preferably Reggio Calabria, which is only a few kilometers away. The reason he gave was that they have explored every possible way to bring the Gospel to the attention of the

townspeople but without success. He thought that elsewhere would be beneficial to the Church. He reiterated that if they do not get any help financially, they would have to give up the store where they are now holding meetings. There are only three members left in Villa San Giovanni.

On Friday, September 27, 1986, we all went to breakfast, which consisted of bread or a sweet roll, milk, and tea or cappuccino coffee. Then, we went to Church. Present on Friday morning were Brother Stefano and Sister Immacolata Romano; Brother Rafaele Magaldi and his wife; Brother Mario Di Gaetano (from Naples) and his aunt; Sister Mary Petroenze; Brothers LoRicco, Morgante, Onorato; my wife and I. Shortly afterwards, Brother LoRicco's wife came in (her first appearance in church) with her sister Giulia Amaretti.

Brother LoRicco introduced the service and afterwards turned it over to me. I welcomed everyone present, and then began to speak on the Restoration of the Gospel and explain the

difference between the Mormon Church and us. Brother LoRicco's sister-in-law asked me many questions relative to both the Restoration and the Book of Mormon. She seemed to enjoy the answers. The Elders listened attentively, apparently pleased with the questions and answers. Giulia Amaretti conceded that what had been presented historically and scripturally made sense to her now. Her questions, which were politely but appropriately asked, opened the way to explain in detail the Restored Gospel.

The problem here is the same as in America: Joseph Smith and the Mormon doctrine. Some of the Elders in Italy did not know the difference between any of the Latter-Day factions and our Church. In fact, some thought that as long as a church believes in the Book of Mormon, they are all alike. God blessed me in explaining the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ. I introduced again our belief in the establishment of the Peaceful Reign. Some of the Elders said that they remembered I had explained this to them last

year but were glad to be reminded about it again. I spoke also on the "gathering of the House of Israel." I spoke to them concerning how Lehi and his family came to America. I told them how Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephites and established His Church as He did in Jerusalem, and why His Church must be called after His name and be established on His Gospel. During the meeting, a letter was read by Brother Morgante that he had received from Brother Dan Casasanta, who wished us all Godspeed at the conference. It was a nice gesture by Brother Casasanta.

On Friday afternoon, I asked that only the Elders be present. I instructed the few missions we have to continue sending reports to the conference of either a spiritual or temporal nature. I suggested that at this conference a different Elder should open each meeting and speak as the Lord inspires him. They liked the idea and accordingly gave some interesting talks, which were enjoyed by all. By this time, Brothers Giuseppe Buonofiglio and

Salvatore Oliva from San Demetrio Corone had walked in the meeting.

I talked to the Elders about the Book of Mormon in detail, using many Scriptures to identify it. I spoke to them concerning smoking, and that the Church does not tolerate any Elder using tobacco of any kind. I told them that the Church would not ordain any man into the Ministry who drinks alcoholic beverages or smokes.

I want to insert at this time an interesting observation. On the previous night when we went to dinner, I noticed several bottles of wine and beer on the long table, which were being used very freely. However, since they noticed that Brother Mario Onorato, my wife, and I did not participate in the drinking; the next time we ate together, there were no bottles of wine or beer on the table, or thereafter. I appreciated their respect for us.

I continued telling the Elders about the experience that the Church had received relative to “doing away” with the use of tobacco as it was an

abomination to God. I also stressed very emphatically that receiving money after praying for someone was prohibited by the Church. I told them that the Church would not tolerate anyone receiving donations or money for prayers offered.

I spoke personally to Brother Magaldi during this conference about his smoking and receiving money for his prayers. I counseled him to end this practice. Whether he will take my advice or not remains to be seen. He appears to be a very humble man; and I really think that if he had been cautioned when the two things came to light, he would have probably given up both practices.

On Saturday morning, there were quite a few present, as it was open for everyone to attend. I spoke to them about the three Resurrections. Although they did not have an abundant understanding of the Resurrections, they were attentive and desirous to know more about them and how the Church understands them. I spoke to them about the Law of Offenses and exhorted the brothers and sisters to love one another and

reconcile themselves immediately if an offense occurs.

I spoke to them about the gifts of the Spirit. On this subject, there was quite a bit of participation, which I enjoyed. The discussions developed into an interesting seminar. I included the duties of every office in the Church, from Apostles to Deaconesses. The Elders felt very happy that I had allowed them to speak freely and participate as they felt motivated. After a pleasant discussion, we went to lunch.

On Saturday afternoon, after Brother Oliva was through with his sermon (which was very good), I continued speaking on the Book of Mormon. I was happy to see how the Elders paid attention and appeared to grasp its importance more than the previous year. Last year they thought that it was not necessary to know anything about the Book of Mormon and the Restoration. Some of the Elders had been told that the Book of Mormon was only an American record, and it had nothing to do with Italy. This year, however, some had done their



“homework” very well indeed; especially Brother Buonofiglio, who earlier had spoken from the Book of Mormon and the Restoration, even using Scripture to “back up” his sermon. I was very pleased with this.

As he often does, Satan was determined to spoil our conference. We had a little disturbance that afternoon. A woman who lives behind the store building rushed into our meeting screaming like a banshee, “Stop your loud singing. I’m a sick woman; and if you don’t stop, I’ll call the police.” The brothers tried to stop her from yelling, but to no avail. She kept it up for several minutes. Some of the brothers were getting agitated with her; and in order to calm down everyone, I asked them to tolerate this woman and pray for her. Brother LoRicco’s sister-in-law spoke softly but sternly to her, telling her that she was acting very unladylike. Finally, the woman left, and we resumed our meeting.

I continued teaching everyone their respective duties, especially how the Deaconesses should take

care of the Sacrament cloths, because I noticed that in some places the cloths were not treated with deference. Prior to this, my wife had talked to some of the Deaconesses, had washed and ironed some of the Sacrament cloths, and instructed them in the appropriate manner in which Sacrament cloths should be handled. They responded with much love and interest and were anxious to please in every way. I spoke to the group about baptism, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, and many other things. Then, it was turned over to testimony, which was a truly wonderful session. The members bore their testimonies with sincerity and love of God. It was an enjoyable time.

When I first arrived in Villa San Giovanni, I spoke with Brother LoRicco about his marriage and asked why he had been married by a Civil Magistrate rather than by one of our ministers. After a short discussion, I suggested that he have his marriage blessed in Church by one of our ministers. The next day he told me that his wife and he had decided to get married in our Church

and asked if I would unite them in wedlock Saturday afternoon.

Accordingly, I joined them in marriage under the authority of the Priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ, and all present were delighted and satisfied with the ceremony. None had ever witnessed a marriage in our Church, so this was a special event to them.

After I was through, it seemed as though all doubts about his marriage in a Court of Law vanished completely. Brother LoRicco's sister-in-law, Giulia Amaretti, thanked us openly for the blessing she received to see her sister married in our Church by a man who had true Priesthood Authority. I believe that by having his marriage performed in our Church, Brother LoRicco will have more liberty among the members in the future. Saturday afternoon was a wonderful time indeed. Everyone enjoyed the meeting immensely.

Everyone was invited to Brother LoRicco's in-laws for dessert that evening. Miss Amaretti had asked me if I would anoint her father, who had

suffered a stroke. We went there and were treated very cordially. They served desserts, which were very delicious. Afterwards, I anointed and prayed for Giulia's father. He seemed very pleased that I prayed for him. I felt a blessing in that home and was certain that this family was ready to receive the Restored Gospel. Later I spoke to some of the Elders and suggested that someone continue visiting this family, as the prospects of introducing the Gospel to them were very good. If they will carry out my suggestion remains to be seen.

On Sunday, September 29, 1986, we had a nice meeting. Some had to leave early, so we administered the Lord's Supper in the forepart of the meeting. After some left, we continued with the service, and it was a remarkable one indeed. This was my last sermon in the Italian language, and I praise the Lord who was with me in this endeavor.

At the close of the service, the brothers and sisters bade us farewell. They embraced my wife and me and wept, shedding tears mixed with joy and sorrow; joy at being together, and sorrow for

having to say goodbye. Brother LoRicco's sister-in-law seemed very interested in the Church. She asked for a Book of Mormon, which we gladly gave to her. I will try to correspond with her as she seems to be a very intelligent woman and very interested in that which we believe. However, since I have returned home, I received information that she does not go to Church because her sister (Brother LoRicco's wife) does not attend Church at all. This is not pleasant to my ears because I think that we are losing a very good potential member in this woman.

Note: This Sunday we were twenty in number in Church, which I am told was one of the largest groups ever assembled in recent years.

On Sunday evening, before Brother LoRicco left, I spoke to him concerning many things; among them, for him to get busy and visit Brother Magaldi to see that he adheres to my counseling to quit smoking and accepting money for praying. Also, I suggested that he visit the members often and teach the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus

Christ. I also advised him to contact the brothers in America to get more information regarding the Church's Faith if he was not sure of it. I also encouraged him to visit Ponza and try to reconcile his differences with Pietro Mazzella. I exhorted him to encourage his wife to attend the Church, as it would set a good example for her family and the Church in Italy.

The members that are there now are wonderful people. They are warm, kind, and generous. All they need is someone to encourage them and indoctrinate them in the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ. During our conference, I enjoyed speaking with Brother Mario Di Gaetano. This man has a very good understanding of the Principles of the Church and especially the Apostasy and Restoration. Where he got this understanding, I do not know. He may have received this knowledge from his Aunt Mary, who lived in Detroit, Michigan, for a long time. His only habit is smoking. He promised me that he is going to make a sincere attempt to quit the habit. If he

does, I believe this man could be used in Italy as he is retired and still relatively young (late 40s or early 50s). I will keep in touch with him.

The brothers and sisters were very excited about the conference and said how much they enjoyed it. They all suggested that in the future the Italian conferences be held in other cities besides Villa San Giovanni. They agreed to have the next conference in San Demetrio Corone.

#### OUR FOURTH TRIP TO ITALY

For many years, the few members in Sardegna desired to erect a church building to the glory of the Lord. After a long time, the city officials of Cala Gonone, Sardegna donated a large piece of land to Brother Stefano Romano for the erection of the church. Accordingly, a contract was made between the city and Brother Romano. As long as our members used the church for the worshipping of Almighty God, it would be theirs. If they stopped holding services, the building and the land would

revert to the city. When this was presented to the members, they agreed wholeheartedly.

Now the difficulty of raising enough money to build the church confronted them. I did everything possible from America to help this project. I spoke to the Foreign Missions Board about helping this project, which they did with a lot of zeal. I believe the Church in America donated approximately sixty thousand dollars. In Italy, most of the money came from Brother Stefano Romano's family. Other members also contributed generously. Finally, the church was built at a cost of approximately two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Not Italian lire, but American dollars!

The site where the church stands is in the richest part of Cala Gonone. The homes in that area are in the five hundred thousand (American) dollar bracket. The city gave our Church the best site. It is a beautiful place indeed. The church has a sanctuary and a two-room apartment with a bath attached to it for whoever goes there from America. How thoughtful of Brother Stefano Romano and



his wife, Sister Immacolata! They not only wanted a beautiful church for Our Lord but a comfortable place for the visiting brothers and sisters.

The great expected day of dedication finally arrived. I received a letter from the Romanos asking my wife and me to “come to the dedication...and you must stay with us during that time,” they insisted. We responded with joy because we felt we had played a small part in the erection of our church in Sardegna.

We left for Italy with a lot of excitement in our hearts. When we arrived in Cala Gonone, Sardegna, we were welcomed cordially by the Romanos. Many brothers and sisters went to the dedication from all parts of America. It was a wonderful tribute to the efforts of the Italian members. Brother Stefano had made arrangements at a beautiful hotel nearby for the visitors. The accommodations were wonderful, and the food was excellent.

On Saturday evening, we held a meeting in the new church. God poured out His blessings in

abundance on all present. There was beautiful singing, speaking, and praying; all to the glory of the Lord. On Sunday morning, the church was filled with members and many visitors. The brothers asked me to give the dedication sermon (in Italian, of course). I asked Brother Stefano Romano to introduce the service, and then I preached. I used the text in the Bible relative to the dedication of the Temple in the days of Solomon. God was good! He blessed me more than I am worthy.

After I was through, other brothers from Italy and America also spoke inspiringly. Then, the testimonies of the members rang out in glory to Jesus Christ and for the privilege to be present at this dedication. We were blessed exceedingly by God's Holy Spirit.

Afterwards, we had dinner prepared by the Italian sisters; a dinner that was superbly tasteful and delightful. They also made a cake especially for my wife and me to celebrate our anniversary. What a wonderful present, surprising and so

beautiful! At this writing, we are unable to visit Italy because of physical conditions, but our hearts are with those wonderful brothers and sisters so far away yet so dear to us.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I ask a special touch of the Holy Spirit on all who read this autobiography. May the blessings of the Lord attend this small work. I do not know how many days, months, or years I shall live. However, I do know this: Whatever my future may be, I humbly pray that I will always be true to the commitment I made to Him as a member and as a minister. I will trust in the Lord to lead and guide me, for I always have in my mind and heart those beautiful words, "I Can Hear My Savior Calling."

I pray that God will bless The Church of Jesus Christ with the greatest of His precious gifts and impart to it the signs that follow the believers in Christ. I pray also that the Church will remember

to keep His Commandments holy and undefiled until the day when it becomes the mountain of the Lord's house, established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the highest hills. I pray also that many Gentiles will soon begin to come into the family of God and be assimilated in the Body of Christ.

I pray sincerely that the Seed of Joseph may soon understand fully how much God loves them and how from their seed shall come forth the Choice Seer, who is called the Latter-Day Moses in the Book of Mormon. Finally, I bid everyone farewell in the Lord and will end this autobiography with the words of Moroni. "And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen" (Moroni 10:34).

## FINAL NOTE

For many years, it has been my dream to have a school in The Church of Jesus Christ, wherein anyone who is interested may learn about topics in various categories of theology (Faith and Doctrine, study of the Scriptures), philosophy (inquiry into the faith and doctrine of other denominations), church history, counseling, and other facets of learning.

After some discussions by telephone and in person, I met in my home with Brothers Anthony Picciuto, Anthony DeCaro, and Greg Baer. We prepared an outline of a potential school of learning. On June 23, 2000, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles gave their approval to present a proposal to the Priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ. With their consent, the Quorum asked the other two Apostles of California, Brothers Thomas Liberto and Joseph Lovalvo, to assist me.

A meeting was scheduled on September 30, 2000, to introduce the primary principles and curricula of the school. Many attended to hear the

presenters' topics; and at the end of the day, they were excited as I am in the prospect of a school of learning.

In January 2001, at the Quorum of Twelve meeting in Forest Hills, Florida, an extended discussion ensued on the initiation of a school; and a committee, consisting of Brothers Dominic Thomas, Paul Palmieri, Paul Benyola, Peter Scolaro, and me, was elected to write a proposal to be presented to the General Church Priesthood at the October 2001 Conference. I was selected as chairman of said committee.

On my return home, despite the painful illness of neuropathy which has attacked me for the past five years, I wrote a proposal that I believe covered the intent and purpose of the school. I notified the rest of the committee to submit a proposal in their own words, and then we would meet sometime during the following April Conference to finalize an acceptable paper and present it to the Priesthood for its decision. Hopefully, it will be received with enthusiasm, and the year's study is

waived. If not, I pray that it will be accepted at the April Conference of 2002.

However, illness struck Brother Dominic Thomas the day before conference, resulting in immediate surgery on one of his carotid arteries. Consequently, the committee did not meet, awaiting Brother Dominic's recovery.

My prayer is that the Church will carry on my vision; and with the passing of years, the school will become a reality. It is written, "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (Proverbs 9:9).

As an epilogue to this autobiography, I wish to state that when I gave up my singing career, a desire to do missionary work and help the Church was born in my heart. With my wife and children, we traveled to many places. To support my family, I worked at many jobs. Sacrifices? No! Throughout the many years in my service to the Lord, whether the road has been rough or smooth, I can always

hear that sweet voice of the Angel singing, "I can Hear My Savior Calling."



