



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

January, 2012

Volume 68, No.1

President's Special Task Force Transitions to Regional Operations Leadership Team

Prior to the October 2010 General Church Conference, Apostle Paul Palmieri, President of The Church of Jesus Christ, was inspired to create the President's Special Task Force. It's mission was to assess barriers to growth of the Church, leadership involvement, organizational interactions and potential conflicts, and outreach programs.

Apostle Peter Scolaro was asked and accepted the responsibility of chairing this task force which consisted of Brothers Paul Palmieri, Thomas M. Liberto, Peter Scolaro, John Griffith, Phil Jackson, John DiBattista, Consultant and Donald Ross, Secretary. A number of meetings and conference calls were conducted during the ensuing months which included sessions with the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, Quorum of Seventy leadership, Region Presidents, leadership of the GMBA, GLUC and others. Several Key Strategies have been proposed, and Mission, Purpose, Vision and Value Statements representing The Church of Jesus Christ have been agreed upon.

Four (4) examples of the proposed Key Strategies are:

1. Expand work among the Native Americans. – NAOC/Q70 + ROLT
2. Develop an outreach to women. – GLUC + President + ROLT Liaison
3. Develop an outreach to friends of the young people of the Church. – GMBA + President + ROLT Liaison
4. Teach the young people the Church's values. – GMBA + President + ROLT Liaison

The Mission, Purpose, Vision, and Values Statements are:

Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

Vision Statement

- "The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church."

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President's Special Task Force Transitions to ROLT— Continued from Page 1

Values Statement

| | DEFINITION | APPLICATION |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Faith | Applied belief and trust in God | Faith in Atonement & Salvation through Christ; absence of guilt. Faith in His company; in His guidance. Reliance upon His will & power. |
| Love/Charity | God's love for mankind. Man's devotion to or adoration of God. | Loving each other with the same Love that God has shown for us. Goodwill, kindness, generosity, helpfulness, tolerance, patience. |
| Hope | Desire or aspiration that is accompanied by a confident expectation of fulfillment. | Hope for Resurrection & Salvation. Hope for the Plans & Promises of God in this life. |
| Unity | Oneness; harmony; continuity without contention; brotherhood. | Being in one Spirit - i.e.: the Holy Spirit. Holding to one Faith. Pressing to be aligned with His Word. Setting aside oneself for the sake of the whole. Working as a team. |
| Righteousness | Meeting the standards of Right in the eyes of Christ. | Following His instructions. Repenting of all unrighteousness. Acting in accord with divine and/or moral law. Maintaining Faith, Hope, and Charity. |
| Congruence | Alignment of our words with our deeds. | Doing the things we say we should/will do. Making our actions prove out our claims: our years, years and our nays, nays. |
| Responsibility | Duty, obligation, burden. | Accepting accountability with reliability. Trustworthiness. Fulfilling our roles as saints, as appointed, as ordained. |
| Empathy | Identifying with another's situation, feelings, motives. | Putting ourselves in the place of one in need; taking on the hurt of another; praying and acting with that motivation that would be associated with our own needs. |
| Loyalty | Feelings of devoted attachment and affection that generate supportive actions. | Holding to Christ, His Gospel, His Church in the face of opposition. Working constructively and positively to overcome internal shortcomings. Being faithful. |
| Leadership | The capacity and ability to lead with appropriate urgency. | Engendering trust and loyalty among the body. Setting the example of perseverance and Faith. |
| Honor | Special esteem or respect: given or received. | Accepting our servitude as the highest opportunity and privilege. Engaging with truthfulness, integrity, and respect. |
| Rights/Respect | Rights: Things due to a person by law or tradition. Respect: Holding another's rights or person in high esteem. | Avoiding offense. Regarding others at least as equals. |
| Duty | A required act or course of action. Moral obligation. | Carrying out assignments. Supporting the body. Fulfilling tasks. Particularly when challenged by lack of understanding or excitement. |

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President's Special Task Force Transitions to ROLT—Continued from Page 2

As of the October 2011 General Church Conference, the President's Special Task Force has transitioned to the Regional Operations Leadership Team concept.

The ROLT is charged with the responsibility to get The Church of Jesus Christ aligned and create the ability to move The Church of Jesus Christ forward. The Region Officers, President and Counselors, will be responsible with getting this done with their respective Regions. The ROLT reports to the General Church President, Apostle Paul Palmieri.

The Regional Operations Steering Committee (ROSC), consists of the Region Presidents, Region First and Second Counselors. It will act as a Steering Committee of the ROLT and set the agenda for growth in the Region(s). The ROSC reports to Apostle Peter Scolaro, Coordinator.

To help facilitate the concept and responsibility, a planning process was conducted, utilizing the SWOT Analysis. The SWOT approach identifies Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It was used to identify the Aspects of The Church of Jesus Christ which are: Faith and Doctrine, Ministry, Physical Locations, Outreach, General Church, Resources, Membership, Church Community, Governance, Media/Communications and Others.

The planning process was conducted by the Region Presidents and was very successful in identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The brothers were very diligent in performing their assigned task. The interaction and cooperation within the groups was excellent.

Much is expected and required of the Regional Operations Leadership Team. Your prayers are requested on behalf of the Apostles, Evangelists, Elders, and Teachers and all those who are engaged in the process to grow The Church of Jesus Christ. We wish to encourage you to get involved, work with your Region, Branch and Mission Ministry to help grow The Church of Jesus Christ, domestically and internationally. The Church needs you; you need The Church of Jesus Christ.

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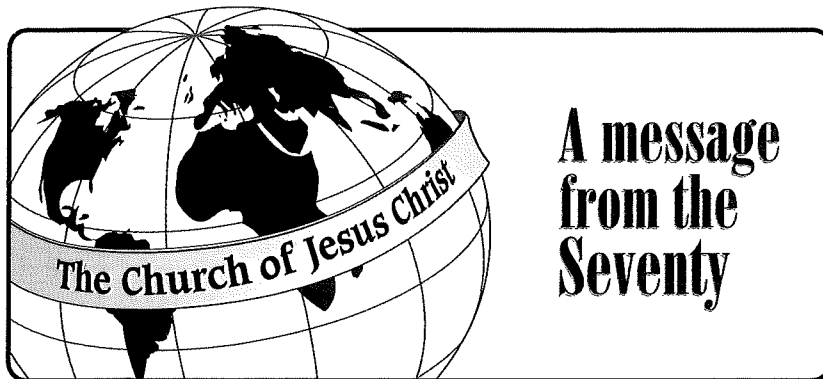
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The Church of Jesus Christ Established in the Country of Liberia, West Africa

By Evangelist J. Joseph Perri



Evangelists Philip Arcuri and Joseph Perri with congregation in Liberia, West Africa

In the month of October 2009 we received an inquiry from a person who identified himself as Pastor Arthur K. Clarke requesting literature and also to know about the faith of our Church. Further communication with Pastor Clarke informed us he was not affiliated with any church but he had an independent group he was conducting Bible classes with.

Several pamphlets including our Faith and Doctrine were sent to him. It was requested that he thoroughly review the contents with his associates and congregation. Should there be any questions or if there were any part of our

faith he did not understand or if he wanted further explanation he should inform me by e-mail. There were a number of questions that he requested clarification on and each answer that was provided seemed to satisfy what they were looking for. One question was asked several times about the need to be baptized again if they were baptized once in the former church they attended. Our Church's position on a paid ministry was clarified and explained to Pastor Clarke a number of times.

One of the most important aspects of our faith was explaining that we were a Restoration Church which includes our acceptance of the Book of Mormon. It was explained even though the Book of Mormon was a part of our faith we were not in any way associated with the Utah Mormons known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. As much information as we would give Pastor Clarke about the faith and beliefs of our Church through e-mail, he and his group thoroughly read and accepted.

After months of communication with Pastor Clarke about our faith, ordinances and church structure, he and his group were convinced that our faith, especially the ordinances of baptism and holy communion, was what they were looking and praying for. Pastor Clarke requested we come to establish The Church of Jesus Christ in his country. The people he was worshipping with accepted the faith of our Church and requested baptism. He also informed me he and the group were so encouraged by what was presented and explained to them; they decided unanimously to change the name of their church from the Brewerville Community Church to "The Church of Jesus Christ Brewerville".

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THE GOSPEL NEWS (ISSN 0279-1056) is published monthly for \$18.00 per year by The Church of Jesus Christ PRINT HOUSE, World Operations Center, 110 Walton Tea Room Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-9998, 724-837-7799. Periodical postage paid at Greensburg, Pennsylvania and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: THE GOSPEL NEWS BUSINESS OFFICE, World Operations Center, 110 Walton Tea Room Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-9998.

Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have platted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3:4-6).

In every saint's life, there is a minister or ministers who have a special place in one's heart. It could be because the minister showed love and compassion towards them during a difficult time. It could be that the minister gave good advice when it was needed most. Sometimes it is because one grew up for many years under the sound of a minister's voice and views them as a father. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, as we all develop special friendships and bonds with others in the Church. However, sometimes, this affection can become dangerous if it becomes more important than Jesus Christ, His Church, or our duty to love everyone around us as we would love ourselves.

Having grown up in The Church of Jesus Christ, there are certainly elders who I seek out for advice, or for comfort and encouragement. There are elders who I see as my fathers, or as extremely special to me. But I have always considered Jesus my best friend and my greatest father. Unfortunately, I have seen others become so obsessed with a particular minister, that they could not function spiritually without constant direction from him. Sometimes people will reach a point where they really only enjoy hearing that particular minister preach or teach, and find all other ministers uninspired. They speak frequently about this particular minister, and what he thinks or does. On more than one occasion, I have seen this kind of minister leave the Church, and the members who seemed to practically worship him, leave the Church as well. This is when you know a person has gone from respecting a minister to obsessing over a minister. We should respect the entire ministry because in these last days, they have been given the Priesthood Authority from Jesus Christ. We should have this same level of respect for every Elder, Evangelist or Apostle, because Jesus Christ has called them to be shepherds over His flock. Of course there will be some who we have a special connection with. However, we should not allow ourselves to "obsess" over any minister. We should see the love of God in all of the ministry, all our brothers and sisters, and all the branches and missions. You never know; there might be another minister, or even brother or sister that you don't know very well, but if you did, you might develop a strong connection to them too!

Most importantly, we should develop that personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In the end, when we face Him, the only thing that will matter is the state of our personal relationship with Him. We cannot say, "Brother so and so told me to do this or do that." We are responsible for our own actions. We should always seek counsel from the Lord whether we decide to seek counsel from an elder or not. The elders are here to help us. They can "plant," they can "water," but it is only God that can help change your situation. Only He can give the "increase." Apparently, the Corinthians did not understand this, and they aligned themselves with Apollos. Others aligned themselves with Paul. What they didn't realize was that Paul and Apollos were preaching the same Gospel. Paul and Apollos never asked the members to listen only to them, or follow only them. I'm sure they used the words of Jesus when He said, *"Follow Me."* Paul said *"follow me as I follow Christ."* Jesus is our Great Shepherd. But when people are "carnal" minded, as stated in this scripture, they see things in a humanly way, and not in a spiritual way. The intelligence of Paul, or the great speaking abilities of Apollos was more enticing to them, than the spirit and inspired Word of God portrayed through them.

Let's learn from the Corinthians, and from Paul's admonition, and let's **"Praise God from whom ALL blessings flow!"**

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Willing To Be Willing

Dear Boys and Girls,

In the world many people like to start off the new year by making long or short lists of things they plan to change or do for the next year. They are determined to do something different. That determination is called resolve, and their lists are called resolutions. Once, one of my friends resolved that she would learn how to ice skate that year. She actually signed up for classes and learned! Some people decide to be kinder or nicer to others. Some decide they want to be more organized, keep their house or room clean, quit biting their fingernails, make the soccer team, practice another skill so they will improve, or change some part of themselves.

There are also some things that each person does that they hope no one will find out. When I was young, my dad quit giving me money for doing chores so I started sneaking into his room and taking quarters and dimes off his dresser to go buy little toys or treats. I felt guilty, angry, and scared. I decided I would pay him back some day so I secretly wrote down each amount and planned to pay him back someday. I never did; as the amount grew I knew I wouldn't have enough money to give back. When I was an adult I told him about how I was mad and stole from him. He laughed and told me to pay him back! He forgave me of course because he loved me.



But I hated living with those feelings of anger and since I knew I was the guilty one, I would blame him in my heart to make an excuse for myself. I knew it was not right to take something that was not mine.

In the Bible Adam and Eve had two sons. (See Genesis chapter 4) The oldest son was named Cain and his brother was named Abel. Cain liked to grow crops and Abel was a shepherd. In those days when people worshipped God, they would bring a sacrifice to burn and offer up their prayers with their gift to God.

When it came time to bring the offering, Abel chose to bring his finest sheep for the sacrifice. Cain decided not to give the first and best for a sacrifice. Now, if you were God, do you think you would know what was going on? Wouldn't our God who created and sees everything know what Cain was feeling in his heart and what he was doing?

The Lord was pleased with Abel and had respect for him. Cain was very angry that God liked what Abel had done and did not like what he was offering. He was guilty and angry. Cain talked with his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him!

And God said unto Cain, "*Where is Abel, thy brother?*" Cain lied and said, "*I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?*" [A keeper is someone who is

in charge of keeping care over someone or something].

And God said, "*What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground, and now you are cursed from the earth. . . When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield [give] unto thee her strength [strong plants]; a fugitive and vagabond [have no home] shalt thou be in the earth.*"

Cain said unto the Lord, "*My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth. . . every-one that findeth me shall slay me!*"

The Lord said, "*Whosoever slayeth [kills] Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.*"

And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, so others will know not to kill him. And Cain left the Garden of Eden area and went out unto the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

He had a wife and they had children, but he was sent away from the presence of the Lord because of his anger and sin.

Can you imagine how terrible his jealousy and hatred toward his younger brother must have been to lose his temper that way? Can you imagine how foolish he was not to realize that God knew every thought, action and sneaky thing he was going to do?

Scriptures in the Bible and Book of Mormon teach us that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. (See Psalms 102:27 and II Nephi 27:23 and Mormon 9:9). God can help us when we are angry, jealous and full of hate. We can get rid of these feelings by talking them over with God.

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The Church of Jesus Christ Established in the Country of Liberia, West Africa

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After a lengthy period of communication with Pastor Clarke, two brothers from the Ghana mission field [who were ordained ministers] were sent as forerunners to visit with Pastor Clarke and his group. Our brothers from Ghana [that lived a short distance from Liberia] were requested to investigate the sincerity of Pastor Clarke and the people he was meeting with. They were instructed to teach the establishment, apostasy and restoration, confirm our belief in the Book of Mormon and give them instruction about the ordinances and structure of our Church.

Evangelist Ford Kankam Boadu and Pastor Emmanuel Bonige planned and made the trip in December 2010. Upon their return back to Ghana, they provided us with a favorable report. They found Pastor Clarke and his group to be very humble and receptive to the beliefs and teaching of our Church. The recommendation of both brothers was that we should accept the invitation from Pastor Clarke and his group to bring the message of the Restored Gospel, baptize and establish The Church of Jesus Christ in the country of Liberia.

We were blessed to hear of the interest of Pastor Clarke and the group he had been meeting with; however, it was our intention to continue corresponding with Pastor Clarke before making a final decision of whether to accept the invitation to plan a visit to Liberia. Corresponding through e-mail, they were encouraged to pray asking God to prepare the way and means for us to make the visit to Liberia and that it would become a reality.

A number of inquiries about the faith and beliefs of our Church have come from various religious organizations requesting to become partners with us or asking financial assistance to further their interests in building hospitals, colleges, clinics, etc. However, when it was explained to the person making the inquiry, that we do not have a paid ministry nor do we have an interest in becoming partners nor providing financial assistance for their special interests, we would not receive any further communication.

Hesitation on our part to make a quick decision to accept the invitation to visit Liberia and establish our Church was made primarily because of what was explained in the previous paragraph. We wanted to be sure the request from Pastor Clarke to come to Liberia to establish the Church was not for any interest of partnership or for any financial interests but to receive the message of the Restored Gospel and embrace it once we explained our faith.

What convinced us that Pastor Clarke was sincere in asking The Church of Jesus Christ to come to Liberia, baptize and establish the Church was the length of time from his first correspondence and the numerous phone calls he made asking if any decision was made as to when we would make our final plans to visit Liberia. He was persistent and wanted a definitive answer that we were planning to make the visit to bring the message of the Gospel to him and his people.

Approximately two years passed from the first correspondence received from Pastor Clarke and the persistence of his phone calls [sometimes two times per week] to inquire from me if a decision was made to make the visit to Liberia. This persistent correspondence by Pastor Clarke led us to understand that his congregation

was also sincere in their request. I kept our brothers of the New Works Committee, the Quorum of 70 and the International Missionary Operating Committee officers informed of the number of phone calls Pastor Clarke made wanting to hear positive news. We accepted his invitation to visit and bring the Restored Gospel to Liberia. Permission was granted to plan and make the trip.

Evangelist Philip Arcuri and I departed on our trip to Liberia on September 22, 2011 for a twelve day visit. Having known of the two civil wars from 1989 to 2003 [which encompassed 14 years claiming 250,000 lives and displacing over 1,000,000 people] we were a little apprehensive as to what we might find upon our arrival in the country the evening of September 23, 2011. Our trust was in God for His protection and that we would find the opportunity to preach the Restored Gospel.

One could imagine the joy we felt as we exited from the Roberts Field Airport in Monrovia to find a committee, who had accompanied Pastor Clarke, welcoming us to the country of Liberia. We felt the apprehension leave us because we found the people very friendly. We felt comfortable as they smiled and embraced us. Pastor Sunday Udo from Nigeria was requested to join us on our missionary tour of this country. To our pleasant surprise he was there to meet us having arrived earlier in the day. Brother Sunday is a very spiritually minded young man that I have known since my first visit to Nigeria in 1979. He and his mother were always available to meet us when we visited their branch. Brother Sunday has a very good knowledge of the Restoration, especially the Book of Mormon and its contents. He made a big contribution

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towards our visit and accomplishments while in Liberia.

As we met for the first time with Pastor Clarke and his people, they gave us a welcoming address. They proved to be very kind and humble. This was my first missionary trip to Africa where we did not use an interpreter. The people understand English because they speak Liberian English. Some speak English with an accent and are hard to understand so we had to listen closely to what was being said with the pronunciation of their words. From the first day that we met with the group in presenting the faith of our Church there was an interaction between us with the questions being asked and the answers that we provided. The people that attended our seminars embraced our faith completely. Many hours were spent in seminars held on the establishment, apostasy and restoration, the Book of Mormon, our Church ordinances [such as baptism, communion, feet washing, anointing, blessing of children, and the church structure, etc.].

Brothers Philip, Sunday and I divided out time for teaching the congregation and training Pastor Clarke and those men we would ordain as teachers and deacons. When one man by the name of Frank [who in a few days became Brother Frank Duana] was given the Book of Mormon, he held it to his chest and made a statement to the effect, "*now the Bible for me is complete*".

Pastor Clarke was asked to introduce the service on the first Sunday we were in the country. We wanted to ascertain his being capable of preach-

ing a sermon. He read from the Old Testament, II Kings Chapter 7, about the four leprous men who refused to sit idle and die but announced to the Syrian king and the people what they found. Pastor Clarke's sermon to the congregation that was present was that they should be like the leprous men. He encouraged them they should go and announce to the people in the village about "The Church of Jesus Christ" they found and invite them all to come and see. His presentation was enjoyable and it gave the brothers who followed many thoughts to continue the service. Before Brother Clarke ended his sermon, he became the first person to request that he wanted to be baptized. He also requested we sing "*I Surrender All*". A woman by the name of Fatu immediately stood and asked to be baptized. Before any other people requested baptism, I made a statement to the effect that we would not have a blanket baptismal service for the entire congregation at one time. We asked those who wanted to request baptism to stand individually and declare their desire to repent of their sins and to be baptized. They were also encouraged before retiring to bed for the evening; to pray and ask God if The Church of Jesus Christ and its teachings were true and if the need for baptism was essential for salvation and to have membership in the Church. Attendance taken was 65.

The following day, Monday, September 26, during our combined morning meeting before separating into our seminar classes, several experiences were related about offering prayer to ask God if the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ were true and if baptism was necessary for salvation. A sister by the name of Fatu Kollie stood and mentioned she asked on Sunday for her baptism, but wanted to know if she made the right choice or decision. She prayed as requested before retiring to bed and during the

night she had a dream where a personage dressed in white appeared and told her she had made the right choice and decision to ask for her baptism. He then gave his approval by giving her a white handkerchief. This was one of the sisters we were inspired to ordain as a deaconess. During this meeting five others requested baptism making a total of seven.

A phone call was received on Tuesday evening, September 27, from Brother James Crudup, our Sector Liaison Apostle, advising me that the recommendation of Brother Clarke for ordination as a Pastor was received and approved. Brother Arthur K. Clarke was set aside by Brother Sunday Udo observing the ordinance of feet washing and ordained by Evangelist Joseph Perri. History was made in the country of Liberia on this date September 28, 2011 by witnessing the baptisms, confirmations, and ordination of Pastor Clarke. On this date by unity and the Spirit of God, we felt to ordain two teachers, two deacons and two deaconesses. It was a beautiful sight as we gathered by the clean, clear running water to witness Evangelist Philip Arcuri, Pastor Sunday Udo and Pastor Arthur Clarke raise their hand towards heaven saying loud and clear and calling the person by name "*Having Authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, AMEN.*"

This would be our last day with the brothers and sisters here in the village of Brewerville. Sunday School was conducted by Brother Frank Duana, a newly ordained teacher. His theme was "*Being Committed*" with good participation. The Sunday worship service reading was taken from Luke 4:14. The sermon content was introduced by Brother Philip. His theme was:

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"Today this scripture is fulfilled in the country of Liberia".

Brother Sunday and I followed using the same theme. Several testimonies were related thanking God for our coming to Liberia to baptize and how they were blessed to hear and be taught the Restored Gospel message.

The next portion of our meeting was devoted to partaking of Holy Communion. This would be the first time Holy Communion would be administered to the newly baptized members in the country of Liberia. It was a pleasure to experience Holy Communion being administered and taken with reverence, each person bowing their head after taking the bread and wine to reflect on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

During our meetings Brothers Sunday, Philip and I sang and taught them several hymns. They taught us a chorus entitled *"Down On My Knees"* which they sang and we joined in numerous times.

Before our departure from Liberia on October 2, 2011 we baptized 15 more souls, making a total of 22 and blessed 11 children. It was on this date The Church of Jesus Christ was organized and established in the country of Liberia, West Africa.

Brother Geepleh, one of the ordained teachers, wrote in his notes—our Church practiced the following spiritual attributes: baptism, bestowal of the Holy Ghost, ordaining of Church officers, feet washing, communion and the blessing of children.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this article because of the civil war, there were many people who were displaced. We visited the displacement camp several times [about 1 1/2 miles from the building where we held our meetings] and saw firsthand some of the 1,000,000 people that were displaced because of the war. There are 45,000 displaced persons living in this camp, some who had been attending Bible study meetings with Pastor Clarke.

During our visit people from this community also attended our seminars and requested to be baptized. Not too far up from where this camp is located there is another camp that we did not visit. Living conditions among the people of this camp are very poor. It was difficult for us to understand how in the day and age we live there could be such poverty and to view the sights as we drove through the camp.

Before concluding this article, I want to relate a vivid experience that was had by Brother Clarke who became very ill with a severe headache during one of the training sessions. He could not hold his head up nor keep his eyes open because the light increased the pain. Brother Clarke was asked if he would like to be anointed and prayed for. He mentioned that he never heard anything about anointing with oil for sickness. His answer was *"yes, he wanted to be anointed"*. He was anointed with the blessed oil and the prayer offered asked God to perform a miraculous healing. Immediately after the prayer was completed, he stated the severe headache was gone; he was healed and thanked God for that blessing. This was a beautiful experience for Brother Clarke and also for the congregation who heard as he related it to confirm the power of healing within the Church. We give all praise to the God we worship and serve.

EVANGELISM:

Proclaiming the Gospel to those who have not heard or received it.

***"Go ye therefore, and teach
all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and
of the Holy Ghost:
Teaching them to observe
all things whatsoever
I have commanded you:
and lo, I am with you always,
even unto the end of the world.
Amen."***

(Matthew 28:19,20)

***". . . Go ye into all the world,
and preach the gospel to every
creature. He that believeth and
is baptized shall be saved; . . .***

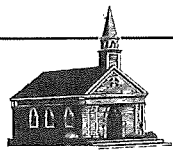
(Mark 16:15,16)

***"And they went forth,
and preached every where,
the Lord working with them
and confirming the word
with signs following.
Amen."***

(Mark 16:20)

***"And how shall they preach,
except they be sent? As it is
written, How beautiful are the
feet of them that preach the
gospel of peace, and bring
glad tidings of good things!"***

(Romans 10:15)



Branch and Mission News

My Testimony of God's Goodness

By Sister Terri Nath

A year ago, this past GMBA weekend, I heard the diagnosis of lymphoma for the first time. I was told if you have any kind of cancer, this is the best to have and easiest to treat. This was said by all the doctors I saw, until we met with my oncologist who said, *"In my opinion no cancer is easy to treat or one better than the other to have."* Having some knowledge of lymphoma and what the first few doctors were saying, I really had no fear. Due to my ignorance, I didn't realize how many types of lymphoma there actually are and how some are more difficult to treat than others. This became a reality when I was diagnosed two months later with one of the rarest and most aggressive forms of the disease.

From the very beginning, we put it in the Lord's hands and I was anointed often. I believe the Lord directed us to the doctors we went to and ended up with. My oncologist told us from the very beginning we don't talk prognosis, we talk remission and then bone marrow transplant for a possible cure. He has always been upfront with us, calm, patient, understanding, and supportive. After the bone marrow test in January to see if the cancer was present there, we found that it was and he told us I was already a stage four. So many things go through your mind and you wonder how is this going to affect your family, but first and foremost, how do you tell them?

I'll never forget that night. My husband and I called and asked our kids here in Pennsylvania to come to the house. We called our son in Texas and put him on speaker phone. We had to stay calm and be as positive for them as we could. After they received the news, our son in Texas asked his brother to say a prayer, and he did. I'm so glad they have grown and learned who to call on for strength and comfort when needed. That was such a blessing.

A week later, the first week of February, I received my first week of three types of chemotherapy. I feared what this poison would make me feel like and if I could deal with it the next six months. The Monongahela Branch, where I attend, had fasting and prayer for me and my family the Sunday before I was admitted to the hospital. That whole week I felt like I was floating on the prayers of the saints and felt great, until the last night I was there. I developed severe chest pain and began to pray. I asked the Lord to use one of the prayers said for me, or put it on someone's heart to pray for me that this pain would go away. At that time I saw a white light come down and touch me. The pain was gone and I rested comfortably the rest of the night. In the morning I told the doctor what had happened and that I prayed God would take care of it. Well, he was upset I hadn't told the nurse, but also said keep praying. An EKG was done and found out my heart was fine. Later on I was told of two experiences that were had that night about me. One was from a brother in Herndon, Virginia and the other was from a sister in Atlanta, Georgia. ***God is so good!***

After the first week of chemotherapy I was ready to go back in the hospital 21 days later. The doctor examined me and said, *"I need to look at the PET scan again."* I asked why,

and he said, *"Because I don't feel any swollen lymph nodes anywhere."* My heart leaped for joy and I was told I would only need four treatments instead of six.

Unfortunately, that ended up changing. I became very depressed and felt God had left me, but He hadn't. When I was able to make it to church the message was on faith and how sometimes we let go of it. However, God is always there to pull you back if you reach out to Him. That's what I did. Many may question being anointed so often but every time I could, I asked to be anointed and ***the Lord always came to my rescue.***

Our goal was to get me into remission for our daughter's wedding. The doctor said I should be well enough for a July wedding, so that plan was set in motion. In June and July I was given a different, stronger chemotherapy than I had before. The side effects from the new treatment caused me to be in the hospital twice, with the last time just ten days before the wedding. Even with these setbacks, I was well enough to make it to my daughter's wedding showers and her wedding. ***God took care of me and answered our prayers.***

In August we found out I was in remission. Now it was time to get a transplant done as soon as possible due to the disease's aggressiveness. The information for the transplant was overwhelming, and being a nurse I was aware of all the possible complications. I'd be on the mountain top one minute and in the valley the next. It was a difficult period, but again, ***God saw me through.***

The time finally came for the transplant preparation in September. Tests had to be run and the stem cells

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My Testimony of God's Goodness

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harvested. I was told it could take three to four collection sessions to obtain the amount of stem cells necessary for the transplant. Praise God, it only took one. Two thousand stem cells were needed for the transplant, and they obtained 2,575. Also a treatment wasn't necessary because I had previously had it.

I was ready to be hospitalized at this point, never realizing how long six weeks can be. The pre-transplant treatment of four treatments was like having a year's worth at one time, and I tolerated pretty well. I was told my mouth and throat would have more ulcers and bleeding than I had in July, which was my biggest fear. However, I only had one ulcer in my mouth and no bleeding. **Praise God!**

I felt pretty good and just kept waiting for the stem cells to start rebooting my body's immune system. At one point I developed a fever of over 104° due to a staph infection. I lost three or four days, but remember my son anointing me. I believe it was the day after my fever broke. While I was asleep from the temperature and infection, I dreamt constantly. All the dreams had brothers and sisters in them, both living and dead. They would come to me and say, "*You're going to be alright,*" and I was always at a church activity. This was an answer to the prayer of my son. Before I went to the hospital, he asked the Lord to give me dreams and experiences. It was necessary to hydrate my body due to all the chemotherapy and infection I had. I began to have trouble breathing due to the treatment as all the medication I needed was in IV form. I asked the infection control doctor how much more of the antibiotic I needed. He said four weeks more

after the blood culture comes back normal. He then looked at my lab work and said, "*Wow, this is unusual.*" I said, "*What's unusual?*" He said, "*I never saw a blood culture come back negative or normal so quickly after the antibiotic is started.*" God was in the matter once again. They were finally able to cut back on the amount of IV fluid I was receiving.

There was another day that I really wanted to be anointed as I just didn't feel right. I didn't know any brothers that lived close to the hospital, so I texted my son telling him I wanted to be anointed. He called a brother who often works in that area and they both came to anoint me. I didn't know he had called the brother until they arrived. To show you how God intervenes and how good He is, when I texted my son this brother's name came to me, but I didn't think he would be able to come since he lives in a different part of the area.

The original plan of four weeks in the hospital turned to five, and then to six. My blood just wasn't improving like I had hoped it would. However, God knew my mental status and knew I needed to get home. The doctors came up with a plan to send me home. They gave me the necessary treatment, prescribed an antibiotic, scheduled a visiting nurse, and allowed me to go to my oncologist in Monongahela for more treatments as necessary [verses driving an hour to Pittsburgh]. So on October 25, I was discharged.

It has been three weeks since coming home and the Lord's still carrying me through each day. Some are good and some are not so good, but overall I'm feeling stronger as time goes by. Last week was the first one in the last eight where I didn't have to have a transfusion of any kind. Due to a lack of immunity, I have to be very careful as a common cold could become

a very serious situation. However, I am blessed that I can still go to church when I feel strong enough. I just can't embrace anyone yet until my immune system is back to normal.

I know there are so many others that are in worse condition than me, and I'm not making light of their conditions. I just want everyone to know the Lord never gives you more than you can handle, and He's always there carrying you through. I want my experience to be a testimony of His goodness, mercy, grace, and love for His children. So many have told me they have been praying for me, both friends and family, in and outside the church. Many that don't normally look to the Lord have felt very strongly about praying in my behalf. All I have wanted is something good to come from this, and good has if it has brought others closer to the Lord.

Thank you again for your prayers, cards, emails, phone calls, gifts of food, blankets, and joy bags. Everyone has been so kind and gracious to both me and my husband. Words can't express how blessed and thankful I truly am.

***God is good –
All the time***

***All the time –
God is good!***

***Praise God
from whom
all blessings flow!***

The Children's Corner

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Find a quiet place and tell the Lord about your bad feelings. Ask him to change you. Or, sometimes when you are still struggling against those bad feelings, you may have to pray for help so you can be willing to be willing to change.

As strange as it may sound, there are times when it is very hard to give up mean feelings towards someone else, especially when they have hurt you. But also remember that God also said, *"If it be possible, . . . live peaceably with all men [people]. . . avenge not yourselves, [get even and fight back]. . . For it is written, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' (See Romans 12: 18-21).*

So, if your enemy has a problem, help him. If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him to drink. The Bible says if we do this, return good for evil, and be willing to do the right thing, it is like heaping coals of fire on the mean person's head! If you are mean, you are just like them.

If someone is making you jealous or upset, do not let evil and sin take over your life, but you can overcome that hate with love and goodness. Make yourself do the right thing while you pray and trust God to handle it. Just try it! At times, we all have enemies in this world. For your New Year's list, return good for evil and be willing to let the Lord change your heart, protect you and give you all that you need. He will do it! Jesus hears every thought and care! Nothing shocks him; he was human too, and loves you.

With love, Your friend,
Sister Jan [Who sometimes has to pray, to be willing, to be willing to change!]

WORD SEARCH (Philippians 4:13)

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**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**
*to all our
readers!*

ADDRESS CHANGE

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Address _____

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Branch or Mission _____