

**A HISTORY
OF
THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST**

VOLUME 2

*Covering the Restoration
to the Year 1960*



A History
of
The Church of
Jesus Christ

Volume 2
Covering the Restoration
to the Year 1960

Organized at Green Oak, Pennsylvania in the Year 1862

Headquarters at Monongahela, Pennsylvania

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Table of Contents

List of Photographs	7
Introduction	11
Introduction to A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ— Volume II	
I. Origin of the Church of Jesus Christ	21
The Early Years: An Old Truth Restored—The Restoration of the Priest- hood—Martyrdom of Joseph Smith—The Leadership Change at Nauvoo, Illi- nois—Sidney Rigdon on His Own—The Calling of William Bickerton—The Church Organizes—Concerns of the Early Church—The Church Proceeds To Indian Territory—The Presidency of William Cadman—The Presidency of Alexander Cherry—The Colony—The Presidency of William H. Cadman	
II History of the Pennsylvania District	63
Branch and Mission Histories: West Elizabeth—Glassport—Monongahela— Roscoe—Aliquippa—McKees Rocks—Greensburg—Vanderbilt—Fredonia— Imperial	
III History of the Ohio District	119
Branch and Mission Histories: Youngstown—Cleveland—Lorain—Warren— Niles—Kinsman—Girard—Rochester, New York—Lockport, New York—Erie, Pennsylvania—Perry—Kent	
IV History of the Michigan - Ontario District	167
Branch and Mission Histories: The Origin—Branch #1—The West Side Mis- sion (Branch #2)—The East Side Mission (Branch #3)—The North Side Mis- sion (Branch #4)—The Windsor Branch History—The Port Huron Mission— Other Missionary Work in the District—Formation of a New Missionary Com- mittee	
V. History of the Atlantic Coast District	301
Branch and Mission Histories: Background—New Brunswick, New Jersey— Brooklyn, New York—Edison, New Jersey—Metuchen, New Jersey—Hopelawn, New Jersey—Bronx, New York—The Freehold, New Jersey Branch—West Palm Beach, Florida Mission—Fort Pierce, Florida—Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch	

VI. History of the California District	365
Branch and Mission Histories: Origins of the Los Angeles Mission—The Bell Branch—The San Diego Branch—The San Fernando Valley Branch—The Lindsay Mission—The Yucaipa Mission—The Tijuana, Mexico Mission—The Modesto Branch—Anaheim—San Jose	
VII. History of the Native American Work	417
The Native American and the House of Israel—The Muncey Mission—The Six Nations Reserve (Grand River) —The Work on the Sarnia Indian Reserve—Missionary Efforts in South Dakota	
VIII. History of the Foreign Mission Work	475
Missionary Work in Argentina—The Establishment of the Church in Italy—History of the Church in Nigeria (Africa)	
IX. The Leadership of the Church	529
The Presidency of the General Church—Members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles	
X. Restructuring of the Administration of the Church	621
Districting of the Church	
XI. History of the General Missionary Benevolent Association	627
XII. History of the General Ladies Uplift Circle	647
Appendices	661
Appendix A: Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ	
Appendix B: Quorum of Twelve Apostles	
Appendix C: Quorum of Seventy Evangelists	
Appendix D: General Missionary Benevolent Association Leadership	
Appendix E: General Ladies' Uplift Circle Leadership	
Appendix F: Branch and Missions, as of 1959	
Appendix G: Branch and Missions, as of 2000	
Appendix H: Foreign Missions	
Bibliography	680

List of Photographs

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Description</u>
35	William Bickerton
51	William Cadman
53	Alexander Cherry
54	Gathering at Jefferson Church Building
55	Tent Meeting near the Jefferson Branch Church Building
56	Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 1913
58	On horseback, Church Colony, circa 1910
60	Gathering at the home of John and Henrietta Grimes
61	Church Gathering behind the Furnier's home, 1944
66	Old West Elizabeth Church Building
75	Fraolina and Tony DiBattista
78	Glassport Branch Building
83	Monongahela Branch Building
85	Old St. John, Kansas Church Building
86	St. John, Kansas Congregation
87	St. John, Kansas Congregation
93	West Aliquippa Church Building on Erie Avenue
95	Aliquippa Church Building
101	Joanna and Vincent Clemente, circa 1945
102	McKees Rocks Church Building on Island Avenue
103	Anna and Tony Nolfi, with Nina and Velia DiCenzio
105	Basilio DiMasso
106	Greensburg Church Building
115	Fredonia Church Building
123	Youngstown Church Building on Gibson Street
133	Lorain Church Building on Broadway Avenue
144	Warren Church Building on Fourth Street
153	Kinsman Church Building
156	Rochester Church Building
158	Lockport Church Building
161	Erie Church Building on State Street, circa 1956
186	Antonio Molisani, 108 years old
208	V. James Lovalvo, Ishmael D'Amico, William Cadman, Joseph Lovalvo
216	Detroit, Michigan in 1944: Marion (Moraco) Maisano, et. al.
224	Detroit, Branch #1 Church Building on Harper Road

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Description</u>
235	Detroit Branch #2 Church Building on South Electric
239	Photo taken in 1957: William Cadman, et. al.
242	The Madonia Family
246	Peter H. Capone's Baptism
247	Church Gathering in 1940: Nancy Conti, et. al.
248	Detroit Branch #3 Church Building on Arndt Street
249	Detroit Branch #3 Church Building on Seven Mile Road
250	Branch #3, Sunday School Class, 1953
255	Josephina and Joseph Conigliaro
258	Detroit Branch #4 Saints: Jim Acquilino, et. al.
266	Frank Ford
268	Burgesses, Watsons, and Hendersons
276	Construction of Windsor Branch Building
277	Windsor Church Building on Howard Avenue
279	Windsor Branch Gathering, circa 1951
305	New Brunswick Church Building on Charles St.
311	Gathering of the saints in New Brunswick, circa 1940s
320	Gathering of Saints, Brooklyn Church Building under construction
324	Stelton Church Building on Knapp Avenue
341	Hopelawn Church Building on Florida Grove Road
346	The Joseph Benyola Family
349	Bronx Church Building on East 217th Street
352	Freehold Church Building on Factory Street
362	Levittown Church Building on Levittown Pkwy
369	Rocco Meo with Peter Capone and Joseph Capone
374	Sarah Watson, James and Margaret Heaps
378	Saints Gathering at Bell Branch, 1953
380	Bell Church Building on Filmore Avenue
382	First Baptism in San Diego Branch, 1945: Louise Ciccati (candidate)
392	San Fernando Valley Branch Building on Roscoe Blvd.
407	Modesto Conference, 1954: 12 Baptisms
408	Conference in Modesto, 1954
433	Julia Nicholas, John and Phoebe Hall
433	Lucy and Eli Snake
434	William H. Cadman at the DeLeary's Home
435	The French Family
444	Thomas Anderson and Family
449	James Cowan with some of his children

Page #**Description**

450	Matthew Miller, Julie and Dominic Cotellesse on the Muncey Reserve
453	Saints Gathering: Rose and Joe Milantoni, et. al.
457	Lillian and Hugh Beaver
459	Charlotte Hill's Daughters
463	Congregation from Six Nations Reserve with Joe Lovalvo, circa 1950
464	Baptismal candidate Joabi Hill carried by Joe Reno and Joe Lovalvo
470	W. H. Cadman with White Buffalo Man, South Dakota, 1953
471	Joe and Lydia Bittinger, Birdie and Thurman Furnier
472	Outdoor meeting South Dakota, 1955, Thurman Furnier
473	Earl DeMarrias and his wife, circa 1955
506	William H. Cadman, A.A. Dick, Joseph Bittinger
508	Women Church Members at Nung Ata
509	Men Church Members at Nung Ata
510	Cadman Memorial Church, only concrete building in Nigeria, 1955
511	Samuel U. Bassey
512	Rachel Arthur, Ladies' Circle President in Nigeria
519	Alvin and Viola Swanson
532	William H. Cadman
534	William H. Cadman was presented a gavel at the Bronx Branch
536	Thurman S. Furnier
539	Gorie Ciaravino
543	Dominic R. Thomas
547	Alma Cadman
549	Charles Ashton
554	Charles Ashton, Rocco Biscotti, Joseph Dulisse and Isaac Smith
557	Ishmael D'Amico
558	Margaret and Charles Behanna
561	Joseph Lovalvo
566	V. James Lovalvo
573	Samuel Kirschner
578	Joseph Bittinger
585	Russell Cadman
589	Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 1975
592	Robert A. Watson
597	Paul Palmieri
601	Joseph Calabrese
607	Paul Benyola
611	Thomas M. Liberto

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Description</u>
614	Isaac D. Smith
618	Peter Scolaro
620	Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 1997
635	"Class of Ruth," Monongahela Branch Sunday School picnic, 1948
636	Hannah Skillen
643	Lou Vitto, Frank Morle, and Norman Campitelle
652	William H. and Sadie Cadman's Family
656	Ladies Circle Gathering, 1957
658	Elizabeth Davidson's Birthday

Introduction

We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. Psalms 78:4-7

Some time during the 1860s a remarkable event occurred during a Church Conference at the Green Oak Branch in the State of Pennsylvania. Many of the saints had crossed the river between sessions to eat some dinner. Upon their return, while in a small boat, there arose a storm of such magnitude that they feared for their safety. Brother William Cadman, an apostle of the Church, arose under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and led the others in the small vessel in a verse of that old familiar hymn:

*Fear not Brethren, Lo 'tis Jesus, Holds the helm and guides the ship;
Spreads the sails and catch the breezes, Sent to waft us through the deep.*

Brother George Barnes, standing on the shore, rebuked the wind in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the saints landed safely on the shore.

This true story speaks volumes about the history of The Church of Jesus Christ—then and now. It is a picture of the Church traveling through perilous waters with one of our Church leaders focusing the attention of the saints to her head—Jesus Christ Himself. The power of God was invoked on behalf of the Church, under the authority of the ministry represented by Brother Barnes as he rebuked the wind, while the

brothers and sisters were singing in unison through the storm. Surely when the Church is united, the strength of God is evident to face any obstacle that comes our way. This powerful illustration concludes with all the occupants of the boat arriving safely at the shore; and thus it is that the Lord has promised, and delivered, safe passage for His Church through the perils and storms of life.

In *A History of The Church of Jesus Christ*, Brother William H. Cadman, the author, in his inimitable way, showed how the history of The Church of Jesus Christ bore evidence to the truths presented in this experience. He begins appropriately with the story of Joseph Smith—giving a brief account of the discovery, translation, and publication of ancient plates—The Book of Mormon. One cannot speak of this Church without placing this record at the center of the discussion for it has had equal stature with the Bible from its inception—being a second witness to the mission, message, and mandate of the Son of God. The Book of Mormon remains a vibrant force in the Church to this day, shaping the focus of her missionary program, the administration of her ordinances, and her expectations and vision for the future—for the Kingdom of God and for the nations of this world, especially Israel.

He further lays the foundation for the book by giving a brief overview of the establishment of the Church. Similar to the illustration of the saints in the boat facing a perilous storm, the Church came through a serious crisis not long after her formation. History points to this, especially at the time of Joseph Smith's death. The Church emerged from this period as the Lord moved upon William Bickerton to be His anointed servant to rebuild His Kingdom here on earth.

Brother Cadman next traces the history of the Church from a local congregation, with a membership confined to the hills of western Pennsylvania, to a worldwide organization with Branches on three continents: Europe, Africa, and North America.

Growth is also portrayed in terms of the broadening of the ethnic and racial diversity within the body of Christ. One ethnic group, which was very responsive to the message of the Restored Gospel, was the Ital-

ian people. The first volume also records the efforts of the Church among the Native Americans.

Volume II offers the reader a broad panorama of the Church History as well as an interesting in-depth focus, with particular emphasis given to the decade of the 1940s (from the ending of the previous volume) and the 1950s. It begins with an overview of the major historical developments featured in the first volume and then provides a blend between a topical and chronological presentation of the Church's history.

This period of history begins with the United States and the Church recovering from a severe economic depression and ends with this nation emerging from one of the most prosperous and peaceful decades in its history. America experienced rapid growth and westward expansion in the 1950s, which most certainly had a significant impact on the Church. The younger generations are presented with unprecedented educational and career opportunities. Transportation and communication become more accessible and affordable than ever before. In times of prosperity and rapidly changing lifestyles, it is often difficult to maintain one's focus on spiritual goals. It is often easy to become less dependent on God and one another for help. These would be only some of the challenges of the 1950s that the saints would face.

At the October 1960 General Church Conference, Brother Donald J. Curry was elected General Church Historian. Then, at the April 1975 Conference, the objectives for the new history book were formulated by the historian's staff. Two years later, a rough draft for the first chapter was submitted to Brother Dominic Thomas, President of the Church. The project did not progress any further until several years later. In April 1980 Apostle Robert A. Watson was elected General Church Historian, and Apostle V. James Lovalvo and Evangelist Idris Martin were selected as his assistants. Shortly thereafter, Brother Watson selected others to also join the historian's staff, which helped to expedite the work of this immense project. Later, subsequent to the death of Brother Idris, Evangelist Carl Frammolino was elected Assistant Historian.

Some of the words that have been used to describe the saints of God in The Church of Jesus Christ are a “. . . chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. . . .” (I Peter 2:9). The word peculiar actually connotes the idea of a people whose own identity is willingly given up in order to take on the identity and name of Christ. It would be a mistake to use the aforementioned adjectives such as chosen, royal, and holy to give significance and praise to the members of the Church. On the contrary, Peter says that, when we understand where Jesus brought us from to where we are today, we will glorify and praise Him “who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9).

The scripture says “. . . other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours” (John 4:38). It is important to be aware of the seeds which were planted and nurtured by our departed brothers and sisters in Christ, and understand and appreciate how our harvest today has been made possible by their labors of yesterday. In some cases, the old seeds may even be dormant in the ground, but, just as the prophesying to the dry bones of Israel led to their resurrection, so shall these seeds be revived even to the point of harvest by the Spirit of God through our labors. We must understand that, although the Gospel is free, it is not cheap. It was not only purchased by the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ, but, in addition, many of our spiritual forefathers have made great sacrifices. Please bear in mind that we are not just referring to the martyrs in the early Church. We need to know that many of our mothers and fathers in the faith were rejected by their family and friends when they were baptized into the Church; yet they remained true to their covenant with the Lord. We must not let their testimonies die. It is our desire that through this record their legacy of faith, courage, divine guidance, and deliverance will be preserved. We need to pass them on to our children even as the nation of Israel was charged by God to remind the next generation of the great things He had done for them in delivering them out of bondage in Egypt.

It is equally important that our history be documented for others who are not members of our Church and who are seekers of truth so that they might know about the blessings of God to the body of Christ. We invite you to pray about what you read and to inquire of the Church for

further information, which we will willingly provide. It is our hope that all who diligently seek for the salvation of their souls will find the same joy and peace that we have found in the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, a careful study of the history of the Church will help us to honestly assess her successes and failures so we might learn from them. In doing so, it is important to recognize that, no matter how pure the doctrine of a church may be, as long as there are people involved, albeit redeemed souls, there will still be imperfections in administration, as well as other shortcomings. Satan has always been eager to exploit those weaknesses, and one way he has done so is through deception and division. The Church of Jesus Christ has certainly not been exempt from these attacks; and, in fact, has been a prime target of his cunning. The Church has always prevailed, by the grace of God; but sometimes it has been at a high cost. This volume will highlight those events that present The Church at its best, but it will also reveal that it is made up of imperfect human beings who face the same struggles and setbacks as anyone else. It must be remembered that the Church is a part of this world, and, as such, is vulnerable to the social ills and the problems that afflict this generation.

“I Wrote the Faith of Your Church”

One experience, which illustrates this point, was received by Sister Connie Moraco from Detroit, Michigan on February 4, 1958, and presented to the General Church at the April Conference of that same year. The Priesthood accepted it “as a true revelation of God,” directing that “each presiding elder have this dream in his possession and refer to it in their elders’ and teachers’ meetings.” It was clear by this action that the ministry believed it to be a revelation that had an important message to the Church. Sister Moraco writes:

... I dreamed that a very distinguished gentleman, just above middle age, came to me and said: “Take your little boy and visit all of the various churches. . . .” He said “Remember, you belong to the true Church, don’t let anyone tell you differently; however, I want you to

show your little boy the things that are wrong with these other churches and how they do things differently than the Church which you attend.”

. . . In one church I found the people looking very proud because of their great church building. In another, I saw them baptizing in a pool. In another, people would come up to the front and ask their minister to pray for their loved ones who were sick. The minister would touch them on the head and say: “Go home now, your husband will be healed,” etc. Still in another church, I found one of our old sisters sitting in their congregation; a sister who cannot read or write. While the minister was talking, she interrupted him and told him that what he said was not right. I, too, knew that what the minister said was not according to the Bible. The people in the congregation who belonged to the church said nothing.

I visited many more churches and made notes. I noticed some were bickering over money matters, some over one thing and some over another. I returned to the man with my notes and began to tell him how happy I was to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ and how these other churches were wrong. I then told him that there was one church that he had not sent me to visit, which was the Catholic Church. He said, “I did not send you there because there is nothing there for you to analyze.”

He then said to me, “Let’s compare the Church you attend with the various churches which you have visited. Remember, you belong to the right Church; however, I want to compare your Church with the others.”

“First, I want to tell you that there is one great fault in your Church—that your ministers are not united. If there existed more unity among your ministers, all the little faults, which I am going to point out to you, would not exist in your Church, and your Church would grow in number.

“You remember in the one church how one of your old sisters found fault when the minister was speaking? This elderly woman does not read or write [but] still she was able to detect the wrong things the minister spoke. See—that is what is going on in the Church you attend; even those who can’t read or write will find fault with your ministers. Yet, did you notice that in that church the people had respect for their minister and did not find fault? That is how your members should respect their ministers, providing, of course, that they are preaching the word of God and not their own opinions. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but, when your ministers speak the true word of God, they should be respected.

“Now take the church that baptized in the pool. True, it is not the proper way, but did you notice that all the members of that church looked with respect on the baptizing and enjoyed it? Yet, in your Church, which is the true Church, some of your members will doubt the person being baptized instead of praying for him that God may help him to become a good member of your Church.”

Each time that this man would point out a fault in our Church, I would try to cover up and say it wasn't so, but he would just pat me on the shoulder and smile as if to say, you know better.

“You remember,” he said, “in one church you saw a man who had done a wrong. In your Church, what would you do with a person like that?” I answered, “We would suspend him.” He smiled and said, “Wouldn't it be better if first your ministers would try to talk to him like fathers? If your little boy did something wrong, would you throw him out of your home?” “No,” I answered; “I would talk to him and correct him with love and tenderness.” “That is the way your ministers should talk to the people who are in the Church you attend—like a father to a son. The ministers in your Church have been placed there for a purpose—that they may administer to the people and father them. Did you notice the patience that the minister of that other church used toward the man which had done wrong? He did not reveal his wrong doings to any member of the congregation but he kept it a secret.

“Remember that church where the people were requesting prayer for their sick?” “Yes,” I answered, “but that is not according to the Bible. In our Church we call for the elders and they anoint with oil and pray.” “Yes,” he said, “that is the correct way; but, in your Church, your people are not healed because they doubt too much.”

He told me many more little faults, all of which I cannot remember, and how much better our Church would be if we would correct them. However, each time he would reassure me that I belonged to the true Church.

He told me that we have one perfect ordinance, which no one bickers about, and that is feet washing. He said, “That is why you are blessed in performing it.”

“. . . [Y]ou do not agree with the different churches of the world, which have done great things for their people, but tell me, what have your conferences accomplished in the last ten years?” He said, “I'll tell you, nothing! You know why? Because your ministers always go there to straighten out something of the past instead of trying to bring up things that may better the Church. I attended one of your conferences and I

was very disappointed to see two of your ministers take up a whole meeting bickering back and forth over nothing.

“... I have just come to show you how your Church finds fault with these other churches, yet you have many faults within the Church you attend. The members of those other churches do their best with what they have. Your best should exceed the best of the other churches because you have the right Church.”

I asked him how he knew so much about our Church and all the things that were going on? He said, “I wrote the Faith of your Church.” I answered, “then you must have also written the laws and by-laws, too.” “No,” he answered, “I had nothing to do with writing them, I only wrote the Faith of the Church.”

I then asked him if he ever attended our Church. He answered, “Yes, I always attend your Church.” I said, “Did you ever visit our branch on West Chicago?” He said, “Yes.” I answered, “I’ve never seen you there.” He said, “You probably never looked for me,” and smiled saying, “I attend all the various branches to see that the Faith which I wrote is kept.” I then awoke.

The fact that the dream was given to a sister and that she was told to take her son with her as she visited the other churches, suggests that the message was intended for others besides the ministry, which is why it has been included here. We may conclude from the context that the messenger was Jesus Christ, He said, “I wrote the faith of the Church.” This experience reaffirms a foundational truth accepted by the Church from its inception—that the faith, doctrine, ordinances, and offices upon which this Church has been built are the same as that of the first-century church established by Christ and His apostles and represent the divine fruits of the Restoration of the Gospel which took place in 1830. Although Satan has sought to destroy it, the Lord has revealed that, in this dispensation of time, the gates of Hell will not prevail against it, and that His Kingdom will ultimately cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

On the other hand, when you have the truth, you are not afraid to face constructive criticism; and the Church, to its credit, has been willing to do this over the years, which is why the priesthood voted to accept this as a revelation of God. The messenger in the dream, in his critique of the Church, found “one great fault:” “Your ministers are not united. If

there existed more unity among your ministers, all the little faults, which I am going to point out to you, would not exist in your Church, and your Church would grow in number.” In other words, if and when the Church has not progressed, it has not been because of doctrinal error but because of human failings. The ministry has recognized that the Lord works through the leadership of the Church and that they must be willing to accept the primary responsibility for its success or failure. On the one hand, the Church should take heart, because its potential is vast; on the other hand it should take heed, because its degree of accountability is just as great.

It is to the honor and the glory of God and His Son, Jesus Christ that this book is written. The pages of this record reflect the joys and sorrows, the victories and defeats, and the healings and afflictions of the Church during changing and uncertain times. If these words inspire the reader, may the glory be to God. Brothers and sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ, this volume attests to the manifestations of the Almighty to you and your forebears with the fervent prayer “. . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins. . .” (II Nephi 25:26)

Larry Watson, Senior Editor

1

Origin
of
The Church of
Jesus Christ

CHAPTER ONE

A stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image . . . and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Daniel 2:34,35

THE EARLY YEARS: AN OLD TRUTH RESTORED

(The author of this chapter is deeply indebted to three men for their dedication to assembling the information in this chapter: Donald Curry, the former Church Historian, who wrote a first draft of this chapter which was invaluable in providing a starting point for this work; Idris Martin, the former Assistant Church Historian, who tirelessly reviewed, transcribed and annotated Church minutes from the early history; and Robert A. Watson, the present Church Historian, who traveled throughout the country to obtain the materials without which this work would have been impossible.)

What is the history of The Church of Jesus Christ? This question would elicit many divergent responses. Some would refer to the various leaders in church history. Others would describe significant events that have occurred.

The true history of the Church, however, cannot be told without first understanding the central truth that draws people to The Church of Jesus Christ. The Truth of the Gospel cannot be found in the history of men (although certain persons have played prominent roles), nor can it be understood by reviewing a sequence of events. The Truth of the Gospel, which makes up the real history of the Church, can only be found in the hearts of her members, for it was in their hearts where the Spirit of God wrought such a mighty change that they never returned to their old life.

Few have ever expressed this central truth of the Church as eloquently as William Bacon, one of the earliest members of the Church. When asked whether the Church members were deluded, he responded:

How can we account for the Lord pouring out His blessings upon us if we are deluded? How is it we have such glorious manifestations of the power and goodness of Almighty God? Why so much peace? Why so much joy? Why such a glorious prospect beyond the grave? How do we feel that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, if all is delusion?

We know we are right, because we have such evidence in ourselves that leaves no room for doubt and we have not this from man, nor from books.

It is the Spirit in our own souls, and it is impossible to be deceived. If we are deceived in these things, then we never saw the sunshine. We never did anything; our existence is all a delusion. . . . But thank God it is not so. We know it. Everyone that obeys the Gospel can have the same evidence. We have the Holy Spirit of God in our own hearts.

You may burn the books. You may take the ministers. You may kill our Brethren. You may shut us out from communion from all the world, but it is still there. It is in us, and the word is there in us, written in our hearts. And you may kill our bodies, but you cannot take away our knowledge. And our soul would go to Glory. Amen. (Martin, January 1858, p. 26)

The history of The Church of Jesus Christ is more about the enduring persistence of the Truth of the Gospel than it is about one crucial man or woman. Certainly, various persons played important roles, but the real hero of the story is the Truth itself weaving its way through men and women. The Truth made the best use of the strengths of these men and women. The Truth endured despite their weaknesses. God's great miracle is His perfect Gospel progressing through imperfect people.

The history begins with Jesus Christ, the incarnate Truth. We believe that Jesus Christ was with the Father when all things were made (John 1:1-3). We believe that the roots of The Church of Jesus Christ began long ago. Satan disguised as a serpent, deceived Eve. God promised that Eve's seed would bruise the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15) From this

point forward, the Old Testament tells the story of the building anticipation of the promised Messiah. The Church of Jesus Christ was fully revealed in the New Testament when Christ delivered the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to His Twelve Apostles and gave His Church the divine commission of evangelizing the entire world.

In more recent times, however, the Church traces her history to a small grove in Palmyra, New York. A young man by the name of Joseph Smith, Jr. found himself grieved at the multiplicity of churches and creeds in his day, “for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk.” (1932 History) This description of the First Vision in this 1832 account is the only version extant that was written in Joseph Smith’s own handwriting. It is also the earliest known account of the First Vision. (Vogel, p. 26) Seeking to know which of the churches was God’s True Church, young Joseph retired to a grove to pray. He had resolved that only God could tell him which of the churches he should join. He was greatly influenced by this promise from the Epistle of James: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” (James I:5)

While praying, the young Smith had a vision:

A pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noonday came down from above and rested upon me, and I was filled with the Spirit of God. The Lord opened the heavens upon me, and I saw the Lord, . . . (1832 History)

According to Joseph, a Voice spoke to him, saying: “This is My Beloved Son, hear ye Him.” Joseph understood he was to join none of the churches:

Joseph, My son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, in My statutes, and keep My commandments. Behold, I Am the Lord of Glory. I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on My name may have eternal life. Behold, the world lieth in sin at this time, and none doeth good—no, not one. They have turned aside from the Gospel and keep not My commandments. They draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me; and mine anger is kindling against

the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to this ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles. . . . (1832 History, p. 157)

This vision would be followed by a visitation from Moroni, the last survivor of an ancient American culture, who told Joseph Smith about golden plates. The plates described by Moroni contained the writings of a lost civilization, a descendant of Joseph, the son of Jacob, and the great-grandson of Abraham. It told of their descendants, their wars and their beliefs. Joseph Smith was to obtain and translate the plates and publish the writings as *The Book of Mormon*.

We refer to this event as the Restoration of the Gospel. When Joseph Smith received the plates from Moroni, September 22, 1827, (1839 History) he was mindful of the total apostasy from the Truth that had been revealed to him years earlier in the grove. *The Book of Mormon* provided great insight into the complete and unadulterated Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What Satan had sought to destroy God would restore.

THE RESTORATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Joseph Smith began translating the plates in early 1828. From about April 12 to June 14, 1828, Martin Harris, one of the original witnesses to the plates, acted as a scribe while Smith translated 116 pages of the *Book of Lehi*—a book that was later lost by Harris. (1839 History) Joseph Smith was left without a regular scribe until April 7, 1829, when Oliver Cowdery began assisting with the work. Cowdery would also become one of the three witnesses to the angelic revelation of the plates.

As Smith and Cowdery worked, they came to the book we now call *Third Nephi*. Cowdery would later reminisce:

After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob upon this continent, it was easily to be seen, as the prophet said would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. On reflecting further, it was as easily

to be seen that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of the Gospel. (*Messenger and Advocate*, October 1844, Volume I, No. I, p. 15)

Cowdery and Smith began to pray for the restoration of this authority. On May 15, 1829, an angel visited them. The angel said: "I am thy fellow servant," Cowdery would later recall, and "upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain on the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!"

THE MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH SMITH

Joseph Smith would go on to be one of the most controversial religious figures in history. In 1830, he published *The Book of Mormon*, and, on April 6, 1830, he organized *The Church of Christ*. He would go on to pronounce numerous revelations, and he would write many things. His life ended in tragedy on June 27, 1844, when a mob gathered outside of the jailhouse at Carthage, Illinois. The angry mob assassinated Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum.

History has been deeply divided on Joseph Smith. After his martyrdom, many claimed that he had provided them with certain truths prior to his death. Over the years, many have stepped forward in an effort to identify the "real" Joseph Smith. Most often, the "truth" rendered by such observers fits rather conveniently with the theological agenda they had prior to their exploration of Joseph Smith's life.

Regardless of what positions are taken on Joseph Smith, no one has denied that, prior to his death on June 27, 1844, the history of Joseph Smith and the history of the Restoration were inseparable. Those involved with the Restoration movement have been defined by where they stood in relationship to Joseph Smith. He was energetic, charismatic, and, time would prove, very difficult to replace.

His death immediately raised the question as to who would be his successor. The three largest Restoration churches trace their history through

three possible successors: Sidney Rigdon, Brigham Young, and Joseph Smith's son, Joseph Smith, III.

Sidney Rigdon

A very obvious successor to Joseph Smith was Sidney Rigdon, the first counselor of the Church and the only surviving member of the first presidency at the time of Smith's death. Rigdon was a charismatic preacher converted to the Restoration as a result of the efforts of Oliver Cowdery, Parley Pratt and Ziba Peterson.

Rigdon was born in 1793 in Washington County, Pennsylvania. His father, William Rigdon, was a farmer living on a farm ten miles from Pittsburgh. William Rigdon married Nancy Gallagher, and Sidney was their youngest son. (Rigdon, p. 15)

Rigdon learned the Bible and history by self-study at his parents' farm. Since his parents would not give him candles for his nightly studies, he collected hickory bark. He would throw the bark into the fire and read by firelight until morning. (Rigdon, p. 20)

After his father's death, Rigdon and his mother sold the farm. Rigdon studied theology under a Baptist preacher named Peters. He obtained his license to preach and began his ministry in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Through this ministry, he developed a reputation as a great orator. He accepted an offer to become the pastor of a Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, but later resigned because he refused to preach the doctrine of infant damnation. (Rigdon, pp. 20-22)

He became associated with Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ. The doctrine of the Disciples of Christ was: believe in Christ, be baptized for the remission of sins and let the Bible be your guide. While preaching for the Disciples of Christ, Rigdon refused to accept pay for his preaching. (Rigdon, p. 22)

When he met Cowdery, Pratt, and Peterson, he was given The Book of Mormon. He quickly read it from cover to cover. He was convinced of its truth, and he became converted to the Restoration. He was baptized and promptly shared his gifted oratory with the followers of Joseph

Smith. In a very real sense, Rigdon had found his home. (Rigdon, pp. 23-24)

His ability to electrify congregations with sermons about the coming wrath of God and the necessity of the Restoration made him a popular speaker in the young Restoration movement. He also became a close friend and confidant of Joseph Smith. In 1833, Rigdon was ordained as Smith's First Counselor, a position he held until Joseph Smith's death. (Rigdon, p. 25)

On June 1, 1841, Smith ordained Rigdon to be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, the same calling as his own. (McKiernan, p. 126) When Joseph Smith announced he was running for President of the United States in 1844, Rigdon was selected as his running mate. (McKiernan, p. 124)

Brigham Young

Young appeared to be a far less likely candidate for Smith's successor. Unlike Rigdon, he had not received the "Keys to the Kingdom" and had not been ordained "Prophet, Seer and Revelator." He had never been the first or second counselor to Joseph Smith and he had never enjoyed the close relationship with Smith that Rigdon had.

Brigham Young was introduced to the Restoration through the efforts of Joseph Smith's brother, Samuel. Samuel was one of the first missionaries, and he had left a copy of The Book of Mormon with a Methodist minister and his wife, a couple named Greene. Mrs. Greene introduced Samuel to one of her brothers, Phineas Young. Phineas and his sons, Brigham and Joseph, and their friend, Heber Kimball, were converted and were baptized. (Bushman, p. 141)

In 1834-5, at the same time as he was establishing the First Presidency with Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith ordained twelve apostles and ordained his own father to be a patriarch of the Church. Young was one of the apostles called. The apostles were expected to go on missionary efforts throughout the world, and Young went on a missionary journey to Great Britain. At the time of Joseph Smith's death, Young was the President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

Joseph Smith, III

A third possibility was the claim of Joseph Smith's son, Joseph Smith, III. After Joseph Smith's death, his wife, Emma Smith, and their son, Joseph, asserted that Joseph Smith had ordained and set apart his son prior to his death. According to the claim, Joseph Smith had ordained his son as his successor in Liberty Jail in 1839 and again in Nauvoo in 1844. (McKiernan, p. 127) As to the ordination of Joseph Smith, III at Liberty Jail, this claim would later be challenged by Sidney Rigdon's son, John Wickliffe Rigdon, who claimed to have been with young Joseph the entire time that he was at Liberty Jail and claimed that the ordination never took place. (Rigdon, pp. 36-37)

Joseph Smith, III was only twelve when Joseph Smith was killed, and it was not seriously considered that he could lead the saints in the troubled aftermath of the martyrdom. (McKiernan, p. 127) In 1860, Joseph Smith, III accepted the position of president and prophet of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

THE LEADERSHIP CHANGE AT NAUVOO, ILLINOIS

When news of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith spread throughout the Restoration, the question of succession was addressed immediately. The persecution of the saints under the leadership of Joseph Smith had been terrible. The leaderless saints were justifiably concerned that the mob mentality that had led to Smith's assassination might extend to include further violence and more death. The question of succession had not been clearly established by Joseph Smith prior to his death. No one anticipated his early demise. The need for someone to take the mantle of leadership was severe and immediate.

Sidney Rigdon had been in Pittsburgh at the time of Joseph Smith's death. (VanWagoner, p. 335) Although the two men had been very close in the past, their history together during the months immediately preceding Smith's death was rocky, at best. Rigdon had accused Smith of making advances on his daughter. (McKiernan, p. 115) Smith had re-

sponded by unsuccessfully attempting to excommunicate Rigdon. (McKiernan, p. 123) Rigdon had been sent to Pennsylvania to achieve some form of separation between the two men.

Rigdon arrived at Nauvoo on Friday, August 2, 1844. He declined to meet with the three apostles present at Nauvoo, preferring instead to first present himself to the saints. On Sunday, August 4, 1844, Rigdon preached to an assembly of the saints on the topic of "Judgment." In his sermon, he related a vision he received on June 27, 1844, the day Joseph Smith died. In the vision, he was told to go to Nauvoo and to present himself as "Guardian of the Church." (McKiernan, p. 127)

Young arrived at Nauvoo on August 6, 1844. On Wednesday, August 7, Young and Rigdon both addressed the ministry gathered at Nauvoo. (McKiernan, p. 128) Rigdon pressed his claim to be Guardian of the Church. His strongest support for this position was his appointment as the spokesman of Joseph Smith and the fact that, since he was first counselor at the time of Joseph's death, he should automatically have become the next president. Young countered that no one could succeed Joseph Smith and that authority should instead be vested in the Quorum of Twelve.

Rigdon called a special conference for August 8, 1844. Once the meeting convened, however, Young took charge. Rigdon was given the morning to present his case. Rigdon shared his belief that he had been appointed the "Guardian of the Church" with the entire assembled congregation. Before Rigdon had the opportunity to request a vote, however, Young called for lunch. (McKiernan, p. 128)

After lunch, Young played very strongly on the idea that no man could replace Joseph Smith. "You cannot appoint a Prophet; but if you let the Twelve remain and act in their place, the keys of the kingdom are with them and they can manage the affairs of the church and direct things all right." (*Journal History*, August 8, 1844) Young then put the issue to a vote:

Does the Church want, and is it their only desire, to sustain the Twelve as the first presidency of this people? . . . If the Church wants

the twelve to stand as the head, the first presidency of the Church and at the head of this kingdom in all the world, stand next to Joseph, walk up into their calling and hold the keys to the kingdom. . . . All that are in favor of this in all the congregation of the saints manifest it by holding up of the right hand. (*Millennial Star*, Volume XXV, pp. 199-201)

Young convinced the gathering at Nauvoo that day to support the Twelve and to elect no new leader. On December 5, 1847, Young, who had resolutely insisted that no one person could replace Joseph Smith, had himself appointed President of the Church by a vote of only four apostles, in a private session while encamped in their Winter Quarters. (Reorganized History, Volume 3, pp. 21-22)

SIDNEY RIGDON ON HIS OWN

Young quickly excommunicated Rigdon. (*Times and Seasons*, September 15, 1844; October 1, 1844; and October 15, 1844) Rigdon believed very strongly that his personal opposition to polygamy was a significant reason that the saints at Nauvoo did not support him. Rigdon refused to attend his excommunication trial, and he was cut off from fellowship on September 8, 1844—one month to the day from the meeting at which he asked to be appointed “Guardian of the Church.” Ten men voted to oppose the excommunication of Rigdon. Each of them was, in turn, cut off and “delivered up to the buffetings of Satan.” (*Times and Seasons*, October 15, 1844, p. 686)

Greatly distressed at this turn of events, Rigdon returned to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the fall of 1844. He published *The Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate*. The first issue of this publication was printed on October 15, 1844. In this first issue, Rigdon explained the purpose of his publication:

It will be the primary object of the editor to give a full and clear development of the doctrines of said church, carefully distinguishing between the true religious beliefs of said church and the strange doctrines which have crept in unawares, and are maintained by some who

would fain make the public believe that they are the only legitimate authorities of the Church whose claims shall be examined and exposed. . . . (*The Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, October 15, 1855, p. 16)

Rigdon held a conference in Pittsburgh on October 12, 1844. He published the minutes of the meeting in *The Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate*, October 15, 1844. The object of the meeting was to distinctly ascertain the minds of the members of the Church relative to the heretical doctrines taught and practiced in Nauvoo by the Quorum of Twelve and some of their associates.

At this meeting, they resolved:

1. to sustain Rigdon as President of the Church
2. to disfellowship themselves from Young's Quorum of Twelve
3. to advise their friends and brethren to stand with them
4. to affirm their faith in the Bible, The Book of Mormon and *The Doctrine and Covenants* [*The Doctrine and Covenants* is a book of writings that The Church of Jesus Christ does not accept as the Inspired Word of God. The book was largely authored by Joseph Smith, and it contains several sections that do not conform to the Bible and The Book of Mormon. *The Doctrine and Covenants* has been substantially revised since its original publication.]
5. to send messengers to eastern branches of the Church to gain support
6. to publish the minutes of the conference

(*The Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, October 15, 1844, pp. 11-12)

Rigdon formally organized "The Church of Christ" on April 6, 1845, fifteen years to the day after Joseph Smith organized the Church under the same name. (McKiernan, p. 136)

One cannot help but notice that the intense struggle about the proper succession of leadership after the death of Joseph Smith had more to do

with the power of men than it did the Truth of the Gospel. Somewhere in the loud debate, the Truth seemed lost. Young, who would take the bulk of the members to Salt Lake City, taught polygamy, baptism for the dead and celestial marriage. He taught that black people could not hold the ministry because they were cursed. (*Journal of Discourses*, 1860, Volume 7, pp. 290-291)

Yet, God had not restored His Gospel only to watch it fall away again. The Truth of His Gospel, obscured by this power struggle, was preparing to go forward in all of its power. God had selected the person who would carry on the Standard of Liberty, and it would ultimately be neither Young nor Rigdon. Instead, it would be an English immigrant by the name of William Bickerton.

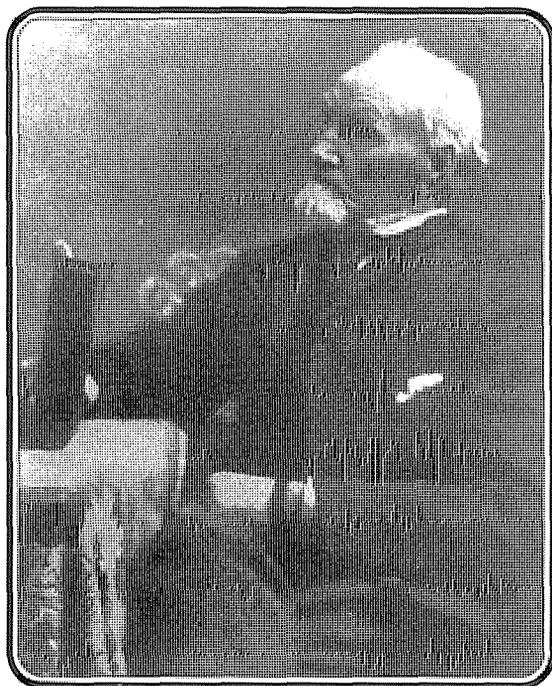
THE CALLING OF WILLIAM BICKERTON

William Bickerton was born in Lancastershire, England, on January 15, 1815. After his father suffered an untimely death, his mother, his sister and brothers, and he immigrated to the United States in the 1830s. They settled in Wheeling, in what is now West Virginia. He was later married, and, in the 1840s, moved into the Monongahela Valley of Pennsylvania. He was a Methodist until he met the Restored Gospel. (Note: Biographical data on William Bickerton is excerpted from a biography of him prepared by his family, which is in the possession of the Historical Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ.)

William Bickerton met Sidney Rigdon in 1845. He was baptized into Rigdon's organization in Washington County, Pennsylvania. He was ordained into the ministry and, eventually, into Rigdon's Quorum of Seventy Evangelists. (*Ensign*, The Church of Jesus Christ, 1863)

While Bickerton was convinced that Rigdon preached with the power of God, Rigdon and Bickerton did develop differences. Rigdon attempted to establish a gathering of all Church members in the Allegheny Mountains. Bickerton disagreed with Rigdon's direction and would later state that he believed that God did not inspire the move to the Allegheny Mountains. Moreover, Bickerton would state in his own history:

He [Sidney Rigdon] went wrong after he came to Pittsburgh. He wanted to make a gathering in the Emlenton Valley of the Allegheny Mountains. At the same time, he had organized a School of the Prophets, or Solemn Assemblies, and many things were revealed to us showing things were going wrong. He sent two of his



William Bickerton

apostles to stop our Assemblies of the School of the Prophets. The objective of the School of the Prophets was to teach the young elders to know the teachings of the Spirit. Many things were revealed that came to pass. After Rigdon went wrong, all that followed him fell away, and I was left alone.

Bickerton found himself without a church. At this time, Bickerton had an experience about the Gospel.

[I]n the vision, I was on the highest mountain in the earth; and [God] told me that if I did not preach the Gospel, I would fall into a dreadful chasm below, the sight thereof was awful. I moved with fear, having the Holy Spirit. Here there was none to assist me and, without learning, popular opinion against me, and the Salt Lake Mormons stood in the way. I could not return back into Methodism again. No, I knew they had not the Gospel. I stood in contemplation. The chasm was

before me, no other alternative but to do my duty to God and man. I went ahead preaching repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some believed my testimony and were baptized, and we met together. . . . (*Ensign*, p. 10)

Throughout the end of the 1840s, William Bickerton preached in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, where he developed a following, and they began to worship regularly. Bickerton's first meeting was beside a ferry at McKeesport in Pennsylvania. He continued meeting there for some time and baptized many into the Restoration.

Left without an organization, but convinced of the Truth of the Restoration, Bickerton associated with Brigham Young's organization for a short while in 1851-52. In 1852, representatives of Brigham Young visited Bickerton. During this meeting, the elders explained to William Bickerton that he was required to teach polygamy. Bickerton resolutely refused to follow the way of polygamy; he exclaimed: "If the approval of God were to come to me by accepting the doctrine of polygamy, I prefer the displeasure of God." (Cadman History, p. 6) With that, Bickerton left the meeting and never again considered association with Brigham Young.

Bickerton met with his congregation at West Elizabeth. On March 10, 1852, Bickerton and his group at West Elizabeth formally separated from Young's organization "because of their adultery and general wickedness." (Martin, March 10, 1852, p. 7) The declaration was unsigned, and it is not completely clear whether Bickerton's entire congregation supported the proposition as early as 1852. By 1855, it was clear that anyone who openly supported polygamy was cut off from the Church.

From this point on, Bickerton taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strongly challenged Young's teachings on polygamy. Bickerton also denounced the doctrine that women could only obtain salvation through their husbands. Freed from the influence of Young's followers, Bickerton taught that the Bible and The Book of Mormon alone were the Word of God. *The Doctrine and Covenants* was rejected because it introduced doctrines contrary to the pure Gospel of Christ. (*Personal Observations*, pp. 12-16)

Throughout the 1850s, the congregations at West Elizabeth, McKeesport and Youghiogheny continued meeting. It is apparent that the saints did not see themselves as splitting from the Church organized by Joseph Smith. Instead, they saw themselves as the continuation of Smith's Church, while Brigham Young led a group of apostates. For example, the Church minutes of July 1857, record that Sister Harniham testified that she had been baptized in the Church for 25 years. When hands were laid upon her for the reception of the Holy Ghost, a promise was pronounced upon her that she would live to see Zion flourish. She announced that day that the promise had been fulfilled. She had seen in the Church the sick healed, tongues and interpretation of tongues, visions, and the discerning of Spirits. Before her eyes, Zion was flourishing.

Bickerton describes this wonderful time for the Church:

We then began to increase in numbers, and formed ourselves into conferences. Elders [were] called and ordained, and the Lord being with us, the signs followed the believers, the gifts of the Spirit being made manifest in tongues and interpretation of tongues, prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, visions, dreams, faith, discerning of Spirits, and the sick healed, and pains removed, so we began to grow up into the knowledge of the Son of God. . . . (*Ensign*, p. 12)

By 1862, the decision was made to formally organize the Church as a legal entity.

THE CHURCH ORGANIZES

After a long fasting and prayer session on July 2, this small group of saints met on Saturday, July 5, 1862 in Green Oak, Pennsylvania for a conference that would last four days. The opening hymn was quite appropriate considering the purpose of their gathering: "Come Let Us Anew, Our Journey to Pursue." On the first day of this conference, the saints discussed the mission at hand, formally organizing the Church.

On Sunday, July 6, 1862, the group met again for worship. During this meeting, Brother Meadowcroft spoke in the gift of tongues. Speak-

ers spoke on the signs following those who believed. There were baptisms and powerful testimonies of the goodness of God. After a full day of worship, the group adjourned.

When the conference reconvened on Monday, July 7, 1862, the spirit of anointing fell on the saints, and many were anointed. Brother Meadowcroft again spoke in tongues, and the interpretation was “Set apart—Set apart and ordain the Twelve. Set apart and ordain.”

Brother George Barnes conferred the gift of faith upon Brother William Bickerton by the laying on of hands. When this was completed, twelve men were ordained as the apostles of the Church. Some of the names are well-known to present day members of the Church: William Cadman, Cummings Cherry, Benjamin Meadowcroft, Arthur Bickerton, Thomas Bickerton, Alexander Bickerton, James Brown, Joseph Astin, Joseph Knox, James Nichols, John Neish and John Dixon. Three men were ordained to constitute the Presidency of the Church: William Bickerton, George Barnes and Charles Brown.

On the final day of this first conference, Brother George Barnes was inspired with the Word of the Lord: “Hear ye the Word of the Lord. Ye are My Sons and Daughters, and I have committed unto you the Keys to the Kingdom, therefore be faithful!” (Martin, July 5-6, 1862, pp. 88-93)

The following year, in 1863, the Church published *The Ensign*, its first publication. The pamphlet was intended to give the world an understanding of the beliefs and history of the Church. At this time, the Church was still operating under the name, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.” The name would soon be shortened, however, to The Church of Jesus Christ.

CONCERNS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

In the early years after organization, the Church clarified her beliefs on various subjects that were raised. Some of the issues involved beliefs espoused by other Restoration groups. Some issues were imposed by the world.

The Name of The Church

Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter. (III Nephi 27:3)

This question, which was in the minds of the Nephites at the time of Christ's visitation to the land of America, was also asked by the early saints after the Restoration of the Gospel. When the Church was being organized under the leadership of William Bickerton, the issue of the name of the Church was of critical importance. Those who had migrated to Salt Lake added the words, "of Latter Day Saints," but the Lord was very clear in His response to the question asked above when He said, "... Ye shall call the Church in My name." Consequently, the official name chosen was simply, "The Church of Jesus Christ."

It should also be noted that Jesus added a significant caveat to his response when He said, "... If it be called in My name then it is My Church, if it so be that they are built upon My Gospel." In other words, it is very presumptuous to use His name to identify a church, unless it is founded upon the doctrine of Christ. He goes on to say, "... Ye are built upon My Gospel." He then provides us the means by which we can recognize whether, indeed, a Church is built upon His Gospel—"the father [will] show forth his own works in it."

The importance of the name of the Church has become even more evident with the passing of time, especially with the growing confusion resulting from the emergence of so many different denominations. This is certainly evident on many of the American Indian Reservations throughout the United States. Shortly after Brother Dan Picciuto brought the Restored Gospel to the San Carlos Tribe, some of those who heard the message went to the Lord in prayer to ask for direction. On September 30, 1961, an Apache woman named Lillian Quasada received a beautiful experience. According to Sister Lillian:

I heard a very soft voice speak and kept repeating the numbers 3-27-I-15. I awoke and looked into the Bible for some meaning to these

numbers. I then searched through my songbooks but still couldn't find anything. I then knelt down and asked the Lord, "please Lord, if that voice I heard came from thee, help me to understand what it means!" I cried after I had finished praying and then I thought of The Book of Mormon that Brother Dan gave me. I started looking into it and finally I turned to III Nephi, 27th Chapter, verses I through 15! I read this scripture and it told me the Church bearing the name of Jesus Christ was His Church and He had named His Church with His name! I said, "Thank you Lord, for showing me that it really is the true Church."

The Book of Mormon

. . . [The Bible and The Book of Mormon] *shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of My Covenants, saith the Lord.* (II Nephi 3:12)

As stated earlier, The Book of Mormon, from the earliest days of the Church, has always been considered to carry the same authority of scripture as the Bible. However, the above reference provides even greater insight into just exactly how it has helped shape the Church's doctrine and identity. In this verse the Lord is explaining that the Bible and The Book of Mormon are to be used as though they are one book. In other words, they complement each other in presenting the fullness of the Gospel, and in order to fully understand the doctrine of Christ, one must read both. For example, a careful study of both records puts an end to any disputations about how, and to whom, baptism is to be administered. It is also indispensable to a fuller understanding of coming prophetic events, especially with respect to the fulfillment of the covenants to Israel.

Another experience received by the above-mentioned Sister Lillian Quasada from the San Carlos Indian Reservation illustrates this point very well. In her own words,

Shortly after I was baptized [on October 1, 1961], I dreamed I was in our Church building in San Carlos. There were just a few of us in the

building. In front of the pulpit, lying in a casket was the body of an Indian lad. On the rostrum were elders from different places. I recognized some from California. Outside the Church [there was] a large number of people from other churches on the reserve. A voice kept telling me to go up to the casket and give gold plates to the boy. I did not go up at first but the voice kept telling me to give gold plates to the dead boy. Finally, I gathered enough strength to begin walking up the aisle towards the casket. A figure I did not recognize put the gold plates into my hands as I walked up the aisle. I thought the dead boy looked like my nephew as I approached him. I placed the gold plates into his hands and immediately the boy came to life. His face became beautifully illuminated. I no longer recognized him as I looked on his shining face. He began waving the gold plates in front of him. Then the Indian boy spoke, "These plates are a record of our people and this is The True Church of Jesus Christ!"

All of a sudden, the people that were standing outside began to come into the Church and quickly filled up the building. As they came in, they kept saying, "Now we know that The Book of Mormon is a record of our people! Now we know this is The True Church!"

Gathering

A central issue to the Church has been the belief in the gathering of the Church. The Church believes that, prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ; the Church shall be "gathered." The honest of heart shall be "gathered," along with Israel and the Church. The early Church members were very focused on the hope that the Gathering would occur in their lifetime. This belief would be very influential in the eventual decision to move to Kansas.

During this time, not long after the turn of the century, a hymn was written that expressed the spirit of this movement so well that it became something of a theme song for the saints of that era. It is still greatly loved by The Church, even to this day. Brother Charles Ashton provides the background:

My sister, Bertha Ashton Smith, composed this hymn. At the time she composed it, there was considerable joy among the brothers and sisters over the establishing of Zion on this land. In fact, the blessing of God bore witness to our souls as the subject of "Gathering in Zion" was

preached and spoken of by the whole Church, with very few exceptions, [and we] had cause to rejoice in happy anticipation of that event. According to my memory this joy remained in the Church for a period of seven years—sufficient time for the Church to become rooted and grounded in the building of Zion on this land and the gathering of Israel. Based on this doctrine and the spirit, which accompanied it, my sister, Bertha, was inspired to write this hymn.

Longing for the Gathering

*On that bright and glorious morning When the Lord shall come again,
And the gathering of the flock will flee to Him,
Then the saints of God will flourish When they meet on Zion's land,
And afflictions, we will think no more of them.*

*When we gather in Mount Zion We will go with one accord,
And we'll look upon that city and we'll sing,
We will sing the songs of Zion In that happy land so fair,
And the Lord will come and we will reign with Him.*

*Then the Lamanites, they will be blest, We'll all become as one
When the saints of God go out to preach to them;
They will have the Spirit with them For to lead them on their way,
And we'll praise the Lord; Hosanna to their King!*

*Then their eyes, they will be opened And their hearts will understand,
And our trials and temptations will be o'er;
Then the Gospel in its power will be preached thru'out the land,
And we'll sing and shout His praises evermore.*

Chorus:

*We are longing for the gathering, That will be forever blest;
We shall gather in Mount Zion, Where we'll sing redeeming grace.*

Native Americans

The Book of Mormon reveals that the Native Americans are descendants of Israel, specifically through the Tribe of Joseph (or sometimes called the “Seed of Joseph”). The early Church began with the desire to bring the Gospel to the “Seed of Joseph.” Brother William

Cadman, baptized into the Church in 1859, would later write that God had revealed to him that the Church is not Israel except through the laws of adoption under the Restored Gospel, and that by the performance of our duties towards Israel, we have the promise of being partakers with them in the benefits of the covenants made to them. (*Expectations*, pp. 2, 5, 7-8, 11)

This belief, that the Church could claim to be a part of Israel only by adoption, but that the promises made to Israel would be fulfilled to Abraham's actual seed, became one of the most significant driving forces in the Church. The Gathering could not occur unless the Church first went to the Seed of Joseph to present the Gospel to them. Again, Brother Cadman said, "We are simply Israel by the laws of adoption, under the Restored Gospel, and that by performance of our duties toward Israel, we have the promise of being partakers with them in the benefits of the covenants made to them." (*Expectations*, pp. 8-9)

Racial Integration

From the outset, the Church has advocated full racial integration. Although the country was tearing itself apart over the question of segregation and other racially charged issues, the Church insisted that all races come under the blessing of the Gospel. (Martin, April 1871, p. 157; January 1874, p. 180 and January 1905, p. 375) In October 1905, the Church suspended an elder for opposing the full integration of all races. (Martin, October 1905, p. 379)

The insistence on full racial harmony would continue. Historian Dale Morgan, who was not a member of the Church, would write:

An interesting feature of the Church's doctrine is that it discriminates in no way against Negroes or members of other racial groups, who are fully admitted to all the privileges of priesthood. It has taken a strong stand for human rights, and was, for example, uncompromisingly against the Ku Klux Klan during that organization's period of ascendancy after the First World War. (Morgan, p. 4)

It is particularly noteworthy that, at a time in the nation's history when segregation was commonplace in most institutions throughout the country, including many churches, two of the most prominent leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ were African Americans: Brother John Penn, one of the Twelve Apostles (the leading body of the Church) from 1910 to 1955, was very instrumental in bringing the Restored Gospel to some of the first Italian Americans who came to the Church, and in like manner, Brother Matthew Miller, an active and prominent evangelist who was ordained in 1937, was one of the earliest and most faithful missionaries to one of the Church's Native American congregations, having traveled from Detroit to the Muncey Indian Reservation in Ontario, Canada for many years.

Polygamy

The Church continually took a strong stand against polygamy. The Church rejected the doctrine as an abomination and a serious error pursued by other Restoration groups. (Martin, 1855, p. 7; *Personal Observations*, p. 24; *Expectations*, p. 14; Testimony of William Bickerton; Cadman History, p. 6)

Authority

A critical concern of the Church was the continuity of the priesthood authority that had been restored on May 15, 1829. On several occasions, God confirmed by revelation that his authority continued in Bickerton and the early apostles of the Church.

Bickerton understood from his vision of the great chasm that God had commanded him to preach the Gospel. For him, the issue of his priesthood authority was simple: God had commanded him to preach the Restored Gospel, and no other option was open to him. As he began to meet with brothers and sisters in West Elizabeth, God began revealing in more express ways that He had cloaked this Church with His priesthood authority.

In October 1857, Brother William Bacon began keeping a journal of experiences in the Church. He recorded an early experience related to the "Church of Philadelphia" described in Revelation 3:7-13. He wrote that William Bickerton received the Word of the Lord as follows:

. . . I accept you this day as My Church to whom My servant John was commanded to write while in the Spirit on the Lord's day: And to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, write; "These things saith he that is holy, he that is True, . . . I know thy works: behold, I set before thee an open door and no man can shut it. . . ." (Cadman History, pp. 8, 9)

This experience was very important to the saints. In Revelation, the Church of Philadelphia was the faithful Church. Moreover, many of the saints understood the letters to the churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation to refer to epochs of the Church. The first letter, to Ephesus, was understood to refer to the experience of the apostolic church. The letter to Smyrna referred to the experience of the church of martyrs in the first few hundred years. Sardis, the church without the Spirit of God, referred to the Reformation. In The Church of Jesus Christ, God had His Church of Philadelphia, the faithful Church.

In January 1858, Brother Charles Brown had a vision that he recounted at conference. In the vision, he saw the Keys of the Kingdom that Jesus had given to His apostles in Jerusalem. In the vision, he was told that authority had been given to the Church to adopt men and women into the Kingdom of God, and that the Priesthood Authority had been again conferred upon men. (Martin, January 1858, p. 56)

In January 1859, the Church received a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. After meeting for three straight days in worship and prayer, the saints continued in song and prayer long after the public had departed their meeting. Suddenly, the power of God came down upon the brothers and sisters, filling the room. All present rejoiced at the outpouring of the Spirit. In the minutes of the meeting, they reported that the Spirit came with such power that some had not felt anything like it. Stream after stream of Glory struck the saints as they worshipped. As one participant described it:

Some declared it to be like electricity upon them. Oh, who can declare or tell the goodness of our God and the riches of His blessings? Oh, who would not praise and adore our God, for his condescension in this watering of his garden [by which he was] making it grow. Oh, praise the Lord! Oh, our soul and all that is within us! Bless his holy name! (Martin, January 1858, p. 105)

Such experiences, reminiscent as they are of Pentecost, were common as the saints gathered together. Visions, tongues and interpretations of tongues, healings and other experiences reinforced to all participants that God was working through this Church in a powerful way. When the time came that the Church decided to organize as a legal corporation, the Church had already been worshipping and enjoying this Second Pentecost for more than a decade.

In July 1860, a sister named Hibbs recorded the following vision:

This morning after I swept out this house, I sat down behind the door, when a woman all dressed in white came in with a crown in her hand. In the crown was twelve stars. She laid the crown upon the stand and said, "This crown belongs to this Church," and then disappeared. (Cadman History, p. 29)

In 1861, the Church would experience another revelation of God's authority. William Bickerton testified:

In 1861, when the [Civil War] began, the Utah people sent missionaries out and scared a good many away to Salt Lake City. At the same time we had Conference within a half-mile of the Salt Lake people's Conference. We had no apostles at that time, but in that Conference, the Lord revealed to us that he accepted this Church as the Church of Alma. There was thirty stood up and testified to the Revelation. Well, Alma never received any ordination. . . . [W]hile King Noah was establishing a many wife Doctrine, Alma had to flee before King Noah, and he wrote down what Abinadi had to preach, and Alma fled to a thicket of timber. . . . [A]bout 200 followed him. Alma asked them if they had any objection to being baptized, and they clapped their hands and said that was just what they wanted, and Alma and Helaman both went into

the water and he (Alma) declared he had the Authority from God to baptize, and they both went down under the water and both were filled with the Holy Ghost and he took all and baptized them having received the Authority from God.

The parallel to the authority cloaked upon Alma in his day was very influential on the early Church. Like Alma, William Bickerton lived in a time when polygamy was being preached. (Cadman History, p. 8) Alma was converted by the testimony of Abinadi; William Bickerton was converted by the testimony of Rigdon. Like Alma, authority was vested upon Bickerton by the revelation of God. In both cases, it was the insistence on teaching the Truth of the Gospel that allowed God to use these men. (The comparisons between Alma and Bickerton were made by many, but most noticeably by Cadman in *Personal Observations*, pp. 43-44.) God revealed to the Church that he accepted it as he had accepted the Church that Alma founded, cloaked with his full authority.

Revelation

A key doctrine of the Church from its very inception has been that God continues to reveal Himself to His Church in this dispensation as in the days of the Apostolic Church.

However, the early Church struggled as they attempted to discern which revelations were from man and which were from God. The Lord had revealed to the early Church that they needed to always remember that they were fallible. (Martin, January 1860, p. 54) As such, they experienced the joy of revelations that proved to be from God, but they also learned, the hard way, the need to be discerning. (For example, the "revelation" was given that when a building was built for the Church at Green Oak, the Church would go from that building to the world. The Church was very discouraged when the building burned soon thereafter.)

The importance of discerning true revelation dates back to the earliest days of the Restoration. In 1830, Joseph Smith instructed Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page to go to Canada for the purpose of selling the copyright to The Book of Mormon, assuring them that their mission

would be successful because of a revelation he had received. In truth, however, all of their best efforts were in vain, and they returned home empty-handed and confused. When Joseph inquired of the Lord as to what had gone wrong, he was told that some revelations are of God, some of man, and some of the devil. The other lesson to be learned from this was the inherent danger of relying on only one man as the sole medium through which the revelation of God must come.

The Church of Jesus Christ today does not ordain men as prophets or seers, nor does it take the position that revelations to the Church may only come by way of the presidency, or the apostles, or even the priesthood. The Church does take the position, however, that the most important criterion with which to judge a revelation is: Is it consistent with the Word of God?

Gifts of the Spirit

From the beginning, the Church has enjoyed the gifts of the Spirit, including the gifts of healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, visions, dreams and many others. The gift of healing, in particular, has blessed the lives of nonmembers as well, and has been a key factor in drawing many to the Church. In an 1885 letter, a copy of which is in the possession of the Historical Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ, Mormon missionaries who had visited members of the Church, inquired of their superiors as to how a group that rejected the authority of Brigham Young could be experiencing such dramatic healings.

Unpaid Ministry

This was another unique position of the Church that distinguished it from most other churches and denominations. From its inception, the priesthood of the Church has performed their ministerial duties without monetary compensation. This has also helped shape the direction the Church has taken and has contributed greatly to the extensive liberty this ministry has enjoyed in preaching the Gospel over the years.

THE CHURCH PROCEEDS TO INDIAN TERRITORY

Almost immediately, the young Church developed a strong desire to bring the Gospel to the Native Americans. In 1868, it was decided that William Bickerton, William Cadman and Benjamin Meadowcroft would go on a missionary trip into Indian Territory.

This first mission was aimed at meeting with Louis Downing, the principal Chief of the Cherokee nation. While on the mission, they met with a combination of African Americans and Native Americans. They had a fair amount of success among the former group but were less successful among the latter. Somewhat discouraged, they returned home. (*Expectations*, pp. 3-4)

The hope of missionary work among the Native Americans continued to be strong, however; and in 1874, the Church appointed a committee aimed at achieving a gathering of the Church among the American Indians, with the hope of establishing "a stake of Zion" among them. The following year, William Bickerton went to Stafford County, Kansas. He proclaimed the area "Zion Valley" and asked a blessing of God on the land. This area is now known as St. John, Kansas. The residents of St. John view William Bickerton as one of the most significant founders of the town to this very day.

Bickerton, after dedicating Zion Valley, encouraged the saints from Pennsylvania to migrate there. (Martin, January 1875, p. 194) The saints who remained in Pennsylvania pledged to support the missionaries as best as they could.

During the same year, 1875, a controversy arose over whether the conference in 1876 should be held in Zion Valley in Kansas or in Pennsylvania. During this time, the division between those who had migrated to Kansas and those who had remained in Pennsylvania became more pronounced. (Martin, pp. 197-215) This division was reflected in the leadership. Brother William Cadman was elected President of the Church in the East, and he presided over the saints in Pennsylvania. Brother Bickerton was President over the saints in the West.

The Church suffered its most serious setback to date in 1880. In April of that year, Brother James Taylor brought charges against Brother Bickerton for “causing a separation in his family and for acting in a manner that was not becoming a Church member.” A counsel meeting was held on April 17, 1880. Brother Bickerton maintained he was innocent and chose not to attend. After the various people involved were heard, the decision went against Bickerton.

Bickerton was suspended from all Church privileges on May 1, 1880. On June 5, 1880, he was separated from the priesthood, along with both of his counselors. By July of that year, William Bickerton had been disfellowshipped, and William Cadman was elected President of the whole Church.

It is worth pausing at this juncture to reflect upon the significance of this event. Whether Brother Bickerton actually engaged in the acts about which he was accused cannot be resolved with certainty. Undoubtedly, this event was a real tragedy for the young Church, as it lost its energetic leader.

Whatever feeling one has on Bickerton’s guilt or innocence, one thing was clearly established in 1880. No person is more important than preserving the Truth of the Gospel. The Truth would progress in The Church of Jesus Christ, and it was not dependent on the strengths or weaknesses of one person, even when that person happened to be the President of the Church.

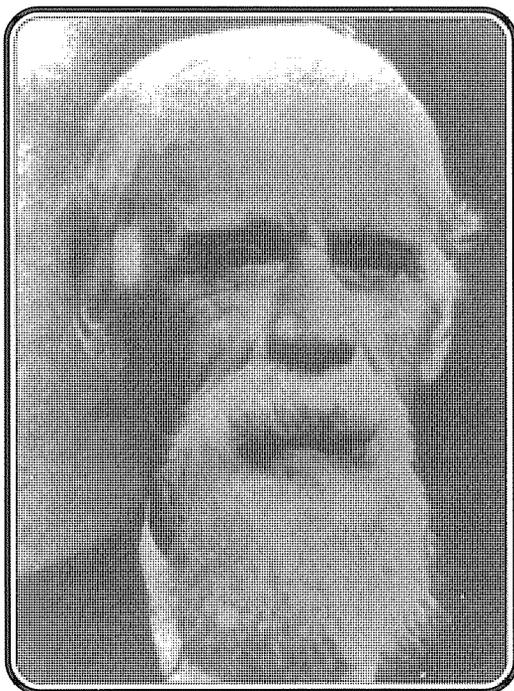
Brother Bickerton challenged the allegations that were raised against him in a court of law at a later date and was exonerated of all wrongdoing. He was reinstated into the Church in 1902. He passed away a faithful member and minister of the Church in January 1905.

THE PRESIDENCY OF WILLIAM CADMAN

In 1887, the Church held its last general conference in Kansas. At this time, Brother William Cadman was President of the Church, Brother William Skillen was his First Counselor, and Brother Cummins Cherry was his Second Counselor.

In October 1887, the Church held a general conference at West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. The headquarters of the Church was returned to Pennsylvania, where it has been ever since.

Brother Cadman continued his Presidency over the Church throughout the 1890's. His position against polygamy and related doctrines intensified. In early 1904, William Cadman was interviewed by *The Pittsburgh Leader*, which quoted him as saying: "I do not know of any



William Cadman

book on earth that is as positively against polygamy as [The Book of Mormon]." (Cadman History, pp. 101-102)

Between 1900 and 1904, there was a growing concern over the organization of the Church, primarily because William Cadman was the only living member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Then, in 1904, the General Church Conference assembled on July 5th. All baptized members participated in the process of filling the Quorum.

The Church unanimously called Brothers Alexander Cherry, Alan Wright, W.T. Maxwell, James Skillen, Thomas Dixon, William Lynch, Thornton Welch, J. L. Armbrust, and William H. Cadman, all of Pennsylvania, and Brothers Marion Campbell and John Williams of Kansas, into the Quorum of Twelve. The gathered conference adopted a resolution:

Be it known to all men that we are witnesses to the revelations of God for the reorganization of the Church and the ordination of Twelve Apostles and while waiting on the Lord, the gift of tongues was given and the interpretation was: "Go on with My Work and you shall accomplish My Will." (A copy of the original resolution is in the possession of the Historical Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ.)

Brother William Cadman died on November 6, 1905. At the time of his death, he had been President of the Church for 25 years, and he was the only surviving member of the original Quorum of Twelve Apostles of the Church. (Cadman History, p. 104)

THE PRESIDENCY OF ALEXANDER CHERRY

At the July Conference the following year, Alexander Cherry was chosen to be the third President of The Church of Jesus Christ.

In 1907, a serious controversy divided the Church. A publication was circulated entitled, *"A Conversation on the Thousand Years Reign of Christ."* The Church became divided over the question of whether man would live as flesh and blood during the thousand years described in Revelation 20. Brother Alexander Cherry, President of the Church, took a strong position that there would not be flesh and blood in the millennium.

Dissension over "Blood Life in the Millennium"

Brother Cherry, in the April 1907 issue of the Church periodical, *The Gospel Reflector*, wrote an article entitled: "The Thousand Years Reign." Brother Cherry's editorial was intended to be a defense of his position that there would be no blood life in the millennium.

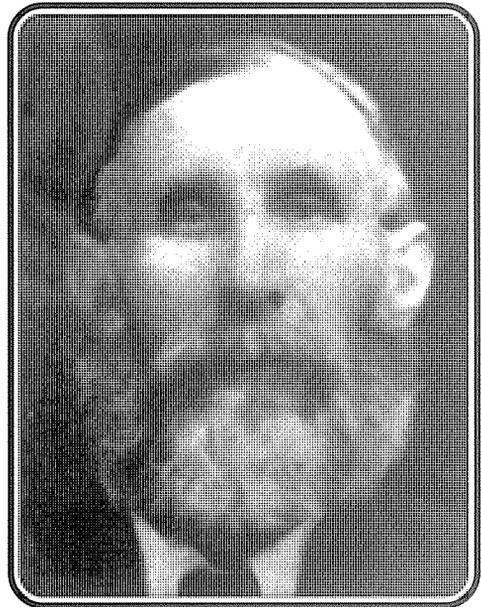
His position, which eventually prevailed, was that the millennium would take place after the resurrection, when we would be in resurrected bodies. Although the intensity over the issue may be difficult to understand today, the importance in the early Church cannot be understated. Brother William H. Cadman described the controversy decades later in

an article entitled: *“An Opportunity for Souls to Repent After Death.”* Brother Cadman stated:

In the controversy that arose [in 1907] relative to “would there be flesh and blood in the millennium” [the thousand years spoken of in Revelation the 20th Chapter]. The Church said, “No.” During the controversy, the question was asked: “What is the object or the purpose of Christ reigning with the saints for the thousand years?” President Cherry (who was considered second to none in this Church) answered the questions . . . as follows: “To tutor the saints of God, bringing them up to a level of understanding of the things yet future to them, the great struggle of the devil’s final attempt to overthrow the saints and God’s purposes, when he would gather together his hosts and compass the camp of the saints and of the beloved city.”

In the end, some members left the Church over the dispute. The controversy became so pronounced that one-half of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles broke away to establish a “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ.”

It was not long before controversy emerged again this time over the issue of the “Three Above The Twelve”—the concept of establishing a presidency above the Twelve Apostles. This was the structure used by Joseph Smith in his “Church of Christ”, and in the July conference in 1908, the Church decided to set aside such a presidency. The Church then called five new apostles to fill out the Quorum of Twelve. This would prove controversial in 1914



Alexander Cherry

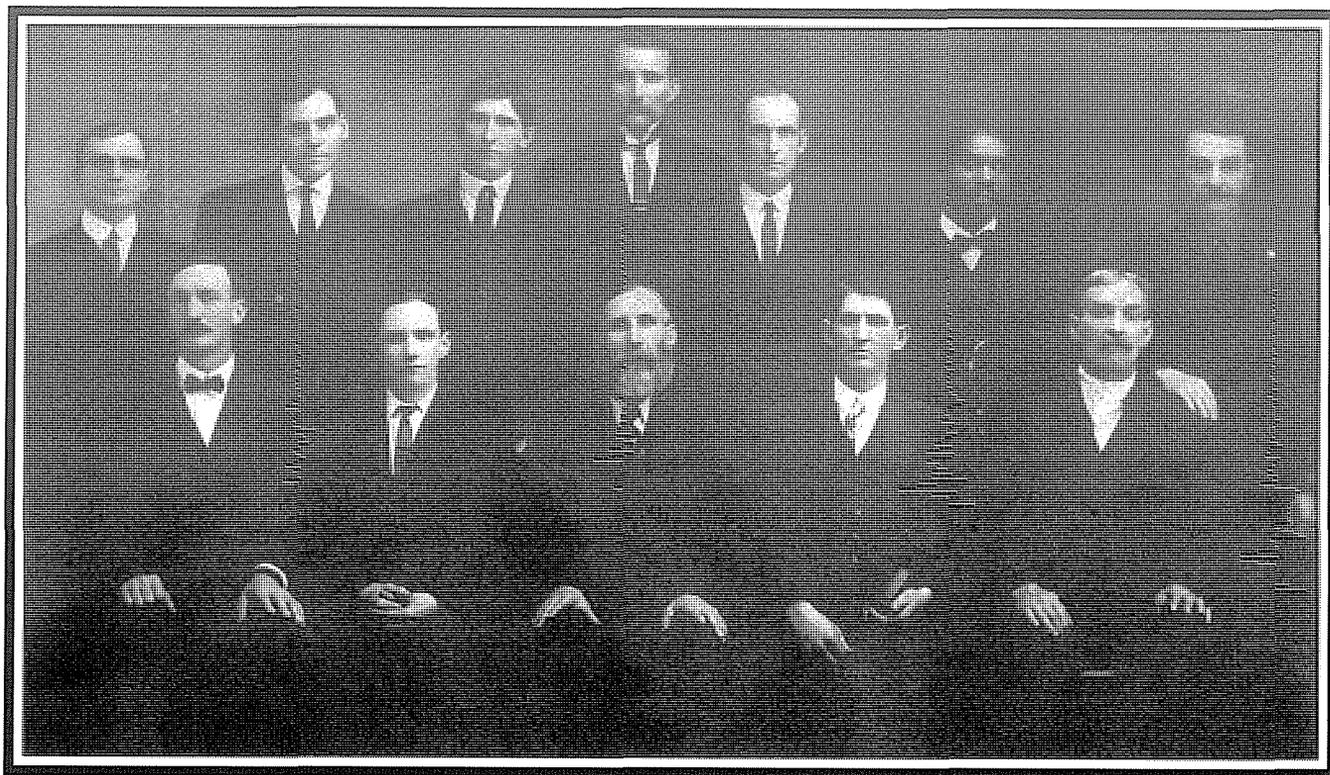


Gathering at Jefferson Church Building, circa 1900.

(1) Lizzie Leonard, (2) Old Brother Curry, (3) William Lynch, (4) Arthur Bickerton, (5) Alexander Cherry, (6) William Cadman, (7) William H. Cadman, (8) Sam Lynch, (9) Frank Gilbert, (10) James Gilbert



Tent Meeting near the Jefferson Branch Church Building, 1902, included in the photo are (1) William Cadman, Sr., (2) Alexander Cherry, and (3) William H. Cadman



Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 1913: (left to right, bottom row) Alma Cadman, Charles Ashton, Alexander Cherry, Nephi Federer, James Caldwell; top row) Fred Smith, George Neill, Vernon Chester, Samuel Sanders, John Ward, John Penn, Robert Anderson

when several ministers turned in their licenses over the issue. A committee was appointed to visit James Caldwell, who appeared to be the leader of this group, to ascertain a reason for the actions. The given reasons were: (1) the Twelve had been made a mere "figurehead" by Brother Cherry; (2) the "Three Above the Twelve" and the election of the brothers every year is but a form; and (3) while the brothers accepted Brother Cherry as the President, they rejected him "as the leader of the people." (Cadman History, p. 126)

The Church separated the involved individuals from the priesthood and suspended them from the Church. James Caldwell organized a group by the name of the "Primitive Church of Jesus Christ" which eventually merged with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ.

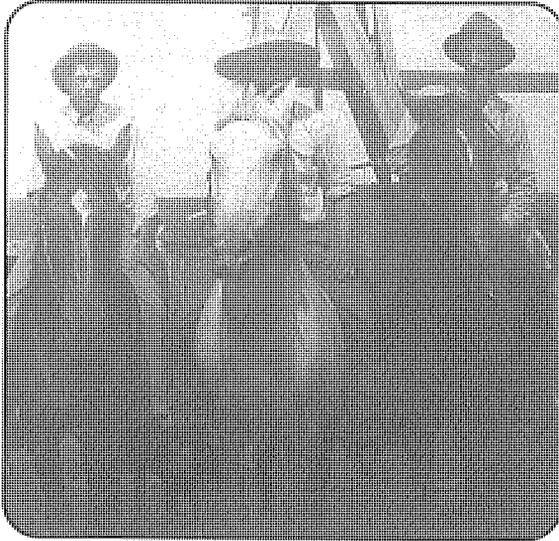
THE COLONY

In 1909, there was a strong interest for the saints to have a place for the Gathering. The conference of the General Church delegated Brother Charles Tickhill to go west for the purpose of seeking a place for a gathering. Brother Tickhill went to St. John where he was joined by Brothers William H. Cadman, Alma Cadman, and Robert Lynch. They purchased 1,920 acres of land in the southeastern part of Comanche County, Kansas, for approximately ten dollars an acre.

The land was a ranch composed of pasture and farm land, with practically no improvements. Alma Cadman was placed in charge of "The Mount Zion Mission," or the land that had been purchased in Comanche County, Kansas. A few families moved to the property, which became known as the "Colony."

There was a large home on the Colony, and Brother Alma Cadman moved his family into the home. He was accompanied by Brother George Neill and his family, Brother John Amalong, the Lynch family, and the Jacobs' family.

The Church held a general meeting in Pennsylvania on February 13, 1910, to establish rules for the Colony. The rules required that the Colony



On horseback at the Church's "Colony" in Kansas, circa 1910 (Alma Cadman on the right)

stay under the direct control and supervision of The Church of Jesus Christ and established a set of moral codes, such as prohibitions on gambling and liquor. The rules established judicial authority and allotted one-half acre of ground to every member.

Unfortunately, as time progressed, the debts grew, and the indebtedness became so great that Brother William H. Cadman requested each wage earner in the Colony to donate one percent of his wages towards clearing the debt. A subsequent conference passed a resolution requesting all male members of the Church to give two dollars per month for the purpose of creating a fund for the Zion Colony. Finally, at the conference of July 1917, a motion was passed to sell the Colony, which was done.

THE PRESIDENCY OF WILLIAM H. CADMAN

Brother Alexander Cherry died on August 31, 1921. At the following July Conference, William Henry Cadman was chosen as the fourth President of the Church. Brother Cadman stayed in that office until his death in 1963.

The following chapters of this book record the numerous ways The Church of Jesus Christ flourished under the careful stewardship of Brother William H. Cadman. Special attention is given to the works in various parts of the world, including the Native American work, the work among the Italians, the spread of the Church westward and the spreading of missions throughout the world. These works all progressed with great vigor during the administration of Brother Cadman.

This small Church that organized in 1862 during times of terrible civil war could not have foreseen the thriving organization that would spread its efforts throughout the world. The Church of Jesus Christ, as we shall see, met every challenge, cleared every obstacle, and continued in the fervent hope of a better day. The noble vision of Brother Bickerton and his Pennsylvania congregations flourished as the Good News of the Gospel was brought to the world.

The Truth of the Gospel had persevered, despite many challenges and obstacles. The next 40 years of the Church would see growth, blessings and a great outpouring of the Spirit. The power of that Spirit, explained so eloquently by Brother Bacon 60 years earlier, was pushing forward to touch new hearts, to reach new souls. The Spirit is ever reaching out. The Truth is marching on!



Gathering at the home of John and Henrietta Grimes. Included in the photo are James Heaps, Ellen Cadman Rennie, Mary Griffith Wilson, William H. Cadman, Fannie Lynch, Ruth Griffith (Cadman), Sarah Cadman Parlor, John and Henrietta Grimes, Elizabeth Cadman Davidson, Hannah Skillen, Robert Anderson, Vernon Chester, Fred Smith, Charles Ashton, Oran Thomas, Walter Grimes, Lillie Grimes, Lizzie Rennie Grimes, Clyde Doran and Sadie Lynch Doran



Church Gathering behind the Furniers' home in 1944.
Seated in front, left to right: Sam Kirschner, John Mancini, Charles Behanna, Unknown, Henry Johnson,
William H. Cadman, Orrie Thomas, Joseph Bittinger, Alma Cadman, Herman Lottig, Gasper Karella

2

History
of the
Pennsylvania
District

CHAPTER TWO

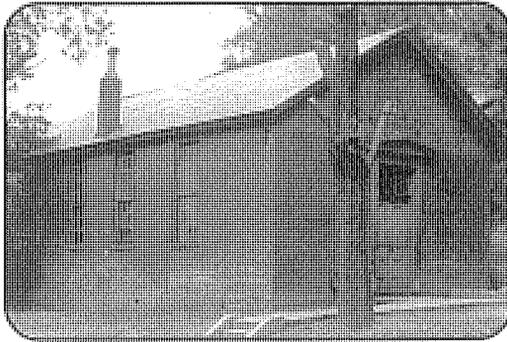
But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . Acts I:8

WEST ELIZABETH BRANCH (Later Known as Clairton)

West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania has great significance to The Church of Jesus Christ, as this was the seedbed where it first took root. As presented in the previous chapter, this is the location where the first congregation in the Church emerged under the leadership of William Bickerton in 1852, which was 10 years prior to official organization of the Church in 1862. Brother Bickerton was the first presiding elder. It is also noteworthy that Brother William H. Cadman was baptized in this branch in 1896, and his brother, Alma in 1895 and was ordained an elder there in 1900.

The West Elizabeth Branch played an important role in the Church over the years, as it hosted many of the General Church Conferences prior to the erection of The General Church Headquarters Building in Monongahela, Pennsylvania in 1930.

Over the years there have been several ministers from West Elizabeth (and later Clairton) who have had an impact on the Church that has been felt far beyond the local congregation. In the following pages we would like to feature three of those men who lived during the period covered by this volume. All three of these brothers were strong expositors of the Truth of the Word of God, and one is still with us as of this writing.



Old West Elizabeth Church Building

(The material for the following three testimonies was compiled by Sister Iva Bordeaux)

Brother Clarence Robinson

Brother Clarence Robinson was a man of God blessed with wisdom from above. In those days education was not as readily available to African Americans, and he was only able to complete elementary school. Brother Jesse Nolfi, a co-worker at the U.S. Steel Plant where he was employed, introduced him to the Restored Gospel. Brother John Penn baptized him on August 17, 1930. After his calling into The Church of Jesus Christ, he became educated by the Holy Spirit that taught him to read, write and preach the Restored Gospel in the power of God. Through his influence, many souls came to the Church, and the Gospel that he preached was sealed in their hearts causing his testimony to live on through the lives of those he touched. He would have someone read to him, and if a word was missed, he would say, "Read that again, you missed something which doesn't sound right." He knew the scriptures, both Bible and The Book of Mormon.

Brother Clarence was later employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad; therefore, he had a pass, and traveled throughout the branches and missions making sure the saints were nourished with the Restoration. Coming from a different church, the message of the Restoration was manna sent down from heaven to his soul, and he loved to share his love for the

Gospel with the saints. "Study the scriptures, search the scriptures, live righteously before God and lay aside all foolishness," were admonitions often delivered by Brother Clarence.

He walked alone for many years, and his staunch belief carried him. Initially, the rest of his family attended other churches and showed no interest in the Restored Gospel. Finally, his son, Harry, came to Brother Clarence one day saying, "Dad, there must be a better way to serve God. There must be a people who are truly serving God." Brother Clarence then said, "Son, there is a better way," and he proceeded to testify of The Gospel of Jesus Christ. Soon, his son was baptized and a few years later became an elder in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Clarence was ordained an elder on January 22, 1933, at the Glassport Branch and later ordained an evangelist. He later became a member of the West Elizabeth Branch. He developed a philosophy, "No place is too far and no price too great for the saints of God," and he, indeed, lived it.

In December of 1962, the General Church sent Brother Clarence to Fort Pierce, Florida to perform missionary work, and Brothers Cleveland Baldwin and Wilbert McNeil, both of the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch, accompanied him. Brother Cleveland later recalled how Brother Clarence mentored them as young men in the Church, challenging them to walk circumspectly before God. As they were driving through the South, Brother Clarence, with deep conviction, made the comment: "One day there will be a great work in this State, the State of South Carolina."

One experience he often shared happened while he was asleep one night. He stated that a beautiful white dove came into his room. When he saw it arrayed in glory, he shouted out, "GLORY," his wife woke him inquiring what was the matter. He exclaimed, "I'm just receiving a little more grace."

His wife, two sons, and five daughters eventually obeyed the Gospel, and his home became a place of joy for many of the saints. In his later years, cancer of the bone began to eat away his flesh. He lay in his bed as this disease took its toll on his body. Even while he was afflicted and

wasting away, he could still be found rejoicing and would exclaim, "I'm in bad shape, but in good hands," preaching the Gospel until he could no longer talk.

One of his daughters had an experience in a dream that she made a telephone call to inquire about how much insurance coverage her father had. The man who answered the phone informed her that he was worth a million. The daughter said, "Oh, no; you must have made a mistake. He doesn't have that much insurance." She asked him to check again to make sure. The man replied, "We checked just before you called. He's worth a million." He passed away in 1964.

Brother Harry Robinson

Brother Harry Robinson, led by the wonderful example of his father, Brother Clarence Robinson was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ in 1953 and ordained an elder in 1958. As a young man, he worked for the State of Pennsylvania as a social worker.

Under the spiritual tutelage of his father, he was taught the goal of striving for perfection and spoke of it often. The article written by him in the June 1957 issue of *The Gospel News* reveals his great desires in the Church. It is entitled: "What Manner of Man Is This?" In this writing, Brother Harry pointed out to the reader the fact that the one and only perfect man (Jesus) has planted a perfect seed in everyone that has been truly and spiritually born again. He continued to say that this holy seed must then be cultivated and nourished until we as sons and daughters of Christ, measure up to the perfect stature of the fullness of Him. Then the Royal Priesthood would be able to present the Church to Christ as a chaste virgin. If the priesthood of reformation could have perfected the saints, it would not have been necessary for God to restore another Priesthood in 1830 under the Restoration of the Gospel. (Refer to Ephesians 4: 11-14). Brother Harry further explained: "I write these words, not as though I have arrived at perfection, but I am striving to reach the mark."

This article represents the type of gospel that Brother Harry preached and tried to live. He was a dynamic and gifted preacher, and many said

that he spoke as the sons of thunder. This power was recognized, as recorded in the April 1961 issue of *The Gospel News*:

At ten to four, having finished the sacrament, Brother Kirschner suggested that the meeting continue beyond the usual four o'clock closing time. Within a matter of minutes this decision proved to have been inspired. Messages were delivered by Brothers William Cadman and Harry Robinson. Phillip Sigmund rose to his feet and asked for baptism. An elated spirit of gladness engulfed the congregation like a cloud. The mounting joy of the moment was accelerated by a declaration from Joan Vansickle that she too desired to be baptized. People began arising to their feet in every section of the Church giving testimonies, having to do for the most part with revelations pointing to baptism."

(More of his testimony forthcoming in the next History Volume.)

Testimony of Brother English Webb, Jr.

... On November 6, 1953, I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ, which maintains her Headquarters in Monongahela, Pennsylvania. It is my testimony that the faith and doctrine of this Church is based solely upon the Bible and The Book of Mormon and that it was established by the revelation of God. On April 20, 1969, I was called and ordained an elder to minister in this Church, and I have worked in an evangelistic effort to establish this Gospel in many parts of the United States.

My testimony begins afar off with bitterness and hatred embedded deep within my heart. I thought God was responsible for the prejudices and racism that was a part of my life in America. As a child I had a great fear of God because of what my mother said to my sister and me—"Be quiet because God is in the lightning, God is in the thunder and God is in the storm." I studied to prove to myself and others that God was a myth, the vain imagination of man's mind. Only the words of my mother kept me from becoming totally convinced that there was no God.

In 1948, while in the United States Air Force, I was sent to Shemya, Alaska. This island was only four miles wide and four miles long, a rock in the far north Pacific Ocean with nothing to see or do but read, gamble and drink. One night arose one of the most violent storms I had ever witnessed while on Shemya. During this raging storm, a ques-

tion came to my mind—"Why not go out and challenge the God of the storm and prove once and for all that God does not exist?" Acting upon this thought, I rose up and went out into the storm. I stood at the edge of a cliff that dropped 250 feet down to the rocks and beating waves of the ocean. The wind, the rain, the thunder and the lightning roared relentlessly as I stood on the edge of this cliff. My clothes were thoroughly soaked as the elements beat against my body. At that moment I raised my fist and shook it toward the heavens and dared God to strike me dead. All fear left me, and, when the lightning did not come out of the heavens and claim my life, I became elated at my own discovery that I had challenged God and nothing happened. I began to scream and rave as I blasphemed the God of the Heavens. I began cursing and laughing at how great I was because I had conquered fear, challenged God and came out victorious. The more I screamed and raved, the more fierce the storm became, as if it was trying to drown out my screaming and cursing. I did not leave that cliff until the storm subsided, realizing that I was still standing and this God that everyone feared had done nothing to me. I then laughed and cried in a loud voice, "THERE IS NO GOD!"

. . . I received an Honorable Discharge from the Air Force on December 8, 1952. I returned to my hometown of Clairton, Pennsylvania where I met Harry Robinson, an old high school buddy. He had just found The Church of Jesus Christ, and . . . was trying to sell me on coming and joining. Harry would come around after work and we would get into discussions about the Bible, which I had studied quite thoroughly while on Shemya for just such occasions as this. Finally, he had to admit that I was too much for him and asked if I would go and meet his father, Clarence Robinson, an evangelist in the Church. I told him I would meet with anyone who thought the Bible was anything more than the vain imaginations of men's minds.

The next evening at seven o'clock Harry took me to his father's home on Park Avenue in Clairton. Harry opened the door so that I could enter first. I looked across the room and saw an old man in a sofa chair seemingly asleep. All of a sudden I heard this voice coming from what sounded like the man across the room speaking loudly saying, "See how the heathens rage and imagine a vain thing." It startled me so that I jumped back, pushing Harry in front of me. . . . Brother Clarence stood up and extended his hand to greet me. . . . Others began to arrive . . . they all greeted each other with a kiss, which I thought was a very weird and odd way to greet someone. I felt turned off as I observed them. At the

beginning of the meeting Brother Clarence picked up the Bible and gave it to me. I jumped to my feet, slamming the Bible to the floor, and said in a loud voice, "This Bible I don't believe!" Brother Clarence just reached down and picked up the Bible and laid it on a little table beside his chair and said, "Well, young man, if you don't believe the Bible, then I have nowhere to start." He then began to discuss with me just why I felt the way I did, and this started a dialogue between us. . . . I tried hard to stay away from those meetings at Brother Robinson's house, and when Thursday nights came I found myself fighting not to go, only to end up going. . . .

The first true experience I remember having was when Brother Harry, Brother Rocco Tassone and the "Old Man" (the name they lovingly called Brother Clarence Robinson) had this great desire to go to their Church conference being held in New Jersey. I was the only one with a car. Out of my mouth came these words, "I'll take you." I was so surprised to hear these words coming forth that I wanted to take them back, but my pride would not allow me to do so. The following Friday after work, I went home and told my wife to pack a bag for me because I was driving these Church people to New Jersey to a conference. . . .

This conference was my first exposure to the Church people. It fell to Brother Paul to put me up for the night. I was an extreme racist myself, and I thought all white people were racist as well. After we had dinner or I should say a late night snack, I learned that Paul had instructed his wife to make a bed for their two little children in the bathtub so that I would have a bed to sleep in. Around midnight Paul and I started talking. When he found out that I was an atheist, he tried every proof possible to convince me that there is a God. We were still at it when the sun came up. I must confess that this was a strange kind of white man, bedding his children in a bathtub so I could have a bed to sleep in, and then laboring all night trying to convince an atheist that there is a God. . . .

The next morning we went to the home of one of the brothers where the backyard was set up for a preaching service under a large weeping willow tree. A black brother by the name of Matthew Miller was preaching on the subject of Peter's denial of the Christ. This brother had great liberty. Suddenly Brother Rocco Tassone jumped to his feet crying and exclaiming, "I'll never deny Him, I'll never deny Him." . . . We came back to Pennsylvania where I wasn't quite so confident in my belief as I had been before going to New Jersey. . . .

... [One day] I was on my way from the housing projects, where I lived, to work on the midnight shift. I always took a short cut across the playground that came to the edge of a steep hill running down about fifty feet to the street leading to the mill. The night was dark, with no light after leaving the project buildings. I was smoking my usual cigarette, for I was up to a pack and a half a day. When I reached about the midpoint of the playground, a voice spoke, "Throw away that accursed cigarette." I stopped and looked all around, thinking someone was playing a trick on me. I went back the way I had come and even opened the door to the project hallway, but I saw no one. Oh! I thought that was just my imagination. I started once again to cross the playground, and, when I got to the exact spot where I had heard the voice, it spoke again, a little louder than before, "Throw away that accursed cigarette!" I then looked to my own mind, for I had studied much oriental philosophy of mind over matter. . . . I knew I was dealing with a force I had never encountered before. Nevertheless, I took one more step and the voice sounded like thunder, "Throw away that accursed cigarette!" My lunch bag went one way, my cigarette went another, and I found myself in the middle of the playground trying to cry out to God for help. Suddenly, I felt a warm sensation starting at the soles of my feet, moving up my legs and through my body. When it got to my mouth, I heard my voice shouting HALLELUJAH! I jumped to my feet and began to run as fast as I could. I felt so free that I wanted to run forever. When I got to the end of the playground I did not stop. I leaped off into the dark night, falling as I landed about ten feet down a steep hill. There I was rolling over bushes, bouncing off trees, stumbling over rocks and all manner of objects that I could not see. When I stopped, somewhat dazed and scratched up, I was halfway on the sidewalk and halfway in the street. At this point the voice spoke again: "Now get up and walk!" I got up, unhurt except for the scratches and bruises, and went to work. Even with an experience like this, I still did not ask for my baptism.

All during this time I was attending the Bible study sessions and going with the group to the Glassport Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ. When I first started going to Glassport, I sat in the back of the Church, but as I got to know the membership a little better I started to move up toward the center. I listened intently to the preaching of the Word of God and to the testimonies of the brothers and sisters. I began to enjoy coming to this Church but did not join. . . .

One Sunday morning, after about three months of attending Church, I found myself sitting on a front row seat. Apostle Charlie Ashton was preaching and was about to conclude his sermon when I began to expe-

rience a vision. The whole floor in front of the pulpit opened up and I was looking straight down into hell. The sulfur fumes coming up out of hell were burning my nostrils and stinging my eyes. I knew I was crying, for the tears were making it hard to see what I was looking at below. I kept blinking my eyelids until I could see men and women strapped down in hell with bonds the thickness of a strand of human hair, which they could not break. A voice was ringing in my ears with a warning, "If you walk the length of this Church to that door, your soul will be lost forever." Brother Charlie concluded his sermon, and as he stepped down from the rostrum, I leaped and grabbed him by his shoulders and began to shake him. I began to cry and to yell, "Baptize me, baptize me, baptize me." I could see by the startled expression on his face that I had frightened him just a bit by my actions. He recovered rather quickly and began to pry my fingers from his shoulders one hand at a time. He began talking to me saying, "Well, young man, I've gotten a little old now for going into the water, but I am sure there is someone here who can baptize you." Brother Clarence Robinson was selected to baptize me. The service ended and we headed to the waters of regeneration. As I was coming up out of the baptismal water, while there was a layer of water over my eyes, I was looking at the throne of God in the Heavens. From behind his throne I could hear choruses of angels singing the praises of God. . . .

THE GLASSPORT BRANCH

(Formerly the Rock Run Branch)

On April 4, 1857, the Church organized the Rock Run Branch. This was only the second Branch to be organized. This was five years before the Church was incorporated in 1862 at Green Oak, Pennsylvania. Brother Charles Brown was appointed presiding elder.

The exact location of Rock Run is not clear, but some time in the early 1920s, the branch came to the town of Glassport, Pennsylvania. Still, to this date, it is sometimes referred to as the Rock Run Branch.

Around 1920, Brother John Penn anointed a terminally ill woman from the City of Monessen, Pennsylvania. This woman was healed and later married. Her name was Sister Carmella Nolfi. One of the witnesses to the healing was a man who was an atheist and subsequently became

convinced of the power of God; and he, too, became a member of the Church. His name was Joseph Corrado.

Brother Corrado then invited Brother Penn to accompany him to Glassport, because he had some Italian friends living there. Many heard and joined the Church, which was the start of the Italian Americans coming into the Church.

Many brothers and sisters throughout the Church can trace their roots back to this branch and a number of missions can also be linked to their extensive efforts to spread the Gospel. The “Word of the Lord” was given in the Glassport Branch on December 21, 1902 as follows:

Hearken, Oh my people and hold that thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Again, verily saith the Lord God, ye are my people.

By the decade of the 1890s, records show that over 600 brothers and sisters had been baptized at the Rock Run Branch.

Testimony of Brother Anthony DiBattista

Another prominent member of the Glassport Branch was a brother by the name of Anthony DiBattista. His testimony of how he met the Restored Gospel follows:

I came from Detroit, Michigan to McKeesport, Pennsylvania in 1919. I [became] acquainted with many people and made friends very fast because I played the accordion. In 1920 I met Brothers Dominic Dintino and Vincent DiGennaro. They spoke to me about The Church of Jesus Christ, and I asked, “Where do you meet?” They said in Dravosburg, Pennsylvania. We agreed I’d meet with them the next Sunday. I met with them on the second Sunday and [on] the third Sunday I was baptized—that was on March 20, 1920.

The Lord began to bless me wonderfully, but my friends began to hate me. One of my best friends was a barber. We also played music together. When I didn’t go to play anymore and I went to his shop, he began to question me why I didn’t go to the shop as often as I did before. I told him I had joined The Church of Jesus Christ. He called me all kinds of names; then he put me out of the barber chair and said I wasn’t his friend anymore. . . .

In the early days in the Church I used to buy *The Book of Mormon* from the Salt Lake people. I purchased four books, two for Brother Joseph Dulisse. On Sunday morning I got up about 5:30 a.m. and I took a walk to his home (he lived in Glassport at the end of the streetcar line) to give him his two books. I saw that he was still asleep so I went a little further from his place where the Glassport Bridge is now. I sat down on the ground and I was going to read *The Book of Mormon*, and the book opened to the 17th Chapter of III Nephi. I started to read. The more I read, the more blessing I felt. When I



Fraolina and Tony DiBattista

finished reading that Chapter I was filled with the love of God, and I asked the Lord, "Why don't we get such wonderful experiences like the Lamanites?" At the same moment I was covered with a white cloud and I felt the glory of God. I heard the word from Heaven say, "This is a true book." The words were repeated three times, I got up and walked down to Brother Dulisse's home filled with the Spirit of God. When he looked at my face, . . . [he] saw my countenance was changed. The Bible was on a stand and I got it and held it in my hand, and it opened itself to the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah. I read the first verse, which said, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" In the twinkling of an eye the walls and ceiling of the room disappeared for the Glory of God filled the room. We all knelt down and gave thanks to the Lord our God and His son Jesus Christ for the Holy Spirit He sent down to bear witness to us. This was a remarkable experience for me in my early days in the Church. (*The Gospel News*, March 1963; May 1963)

Til Earth is Good Again

Brother James Curry, an elder of the Glassport Branch for many years, was blessed with a gift for understanding and communicating some of the deeper truths of the Gospel. A man of keen intellect and insight, his impact on the Church came more by way of the pen than through missionary work. A prolific writer, he wrote many articles for *The Gospel News* covering a wide range of theological topics. He was also inspired to write a few hymns. One of those hymns, *'Til Earth is Good Again*, provides us with a clearer vision of the glorious future awaiting the Saints of God in the latter days. We will defer to Brother Curry, himself, to explain how he came to write the words:

Back in the 1940s I wrote an article for *The Gospel News* in which I advanced the idea that the Ancient of Days should exist on both ends of time, the Ancient of Days of the past being that first thousand year period following the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden; the Ancient of Days of the future being that last, or seventh, thousand year period prior to what we call the end of the world. After finishing it, a disquieting feeling that there was something wrong with the article troubled me. Several days later as I sat struggling with the problem, a little cloud appeared before me. Out of the cloud came a little word. It came toward me, growing in size as it came.

I had often heard of the "Living Word". This word seemed alive. It was capable of reason—movement—expression. It was the word RESTORE.

I stared at the word dumbly, uncomprehendingly. It faded away, only to appear a second time. It seemed to be saying: "It is this way. RESTORE. RESTORE." Baffled, I could only stare at it dumbly, as before.

The word faded away and appeared for a third time. It seemed to be somewhat agitated because it had not gotten through to me. It seemed to say: "Don't you see how it is? RESTORE! RESTORE!"

As the word faded away, its meaning began to dawn upon me, and with it, full understanding came. It had told me that the work in which the Latter Day Church is engaged is the RESTORATION of the Ancient of Days.

I related my experience to my sister, Gertrude, who failed to grasp its meaning. She took her problem to God and had the following experience:

She dreamed that she had found an old painting of the kind that men call a masterpiece. Someone had smeared mud all over the painting. She took it down into the basement of her home where there was a barrel of water. She used the water from the barrel to wash the mud from the painting. As the mud came away, the original colors and beauty of the painting were revealed. When she had finished, the barrel was empty and the water covered the whole floor of the basement.

The barrel of water was a representation of the waters of life. The fact that Sister Gertrude used the whole barrel of water indicates that the sum total of heaven and earth's resources will be utilized to wash Satan's mud from God's Masterpiece. When the last vestige of mud has been removed, the earth shall stand forth in paradisiacal glory. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah II:9)

Brother Curry was inspired to ask Sister Sadie Cadman to write the music for the lyrics. Unbeknown to him, however, was the fact that Sister Sadie in September of 1959 had become blind. At the time this happened she was engaged in the writing of *The Book of Mormon Concordance*. With her sight now gone, it seemed that her will to live had vanished with it. Her daughter, Sara, recalls her reaction to this request:

Brother Curry did not know of her blindness. After reading the letter for her, I wanted her to tell him, for I knew he would understand; but she didn't want to tell him even though she felt that without her sight it was an impossible task. She asked me to read the words of the poem to her which I did several times.

One day as I went over to her home, she said she believed she had a tune for Brother Curry's hymn. She said the meter was difficult but thought she could sing it if I could play it for her. We went to the piano, and, as she sang I played, until I could play and sing the words as she had. Later, my sister Mabel and I wrote the notes, and the music was given to Brother Curry for his hymn, *'Til Earth Is Good Again*. He didn't know of her blindness until after the music was written.

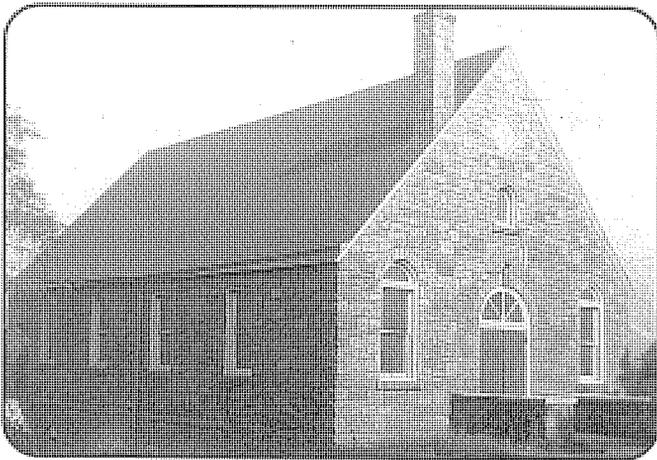
The words of this beautiful hymn follow:

*Lord, God, when thou didst finish all thy labors
To calmly survey all the world that stood,
Before Thee like a jewel among its neighbors,
Thou saw that all Thy hand had made was good.*

*But oh, the heart-felt pain and consternation,
As from the fiery pit I see released,
A great dark tide of evil degradation,
Spread o'er the beauty of Thy masterpiece.*

*My heart leaps high as from Thy resurrection
I see a stream of healing waters flow
To wash away the dross and imperfection
And Eden's glories burst again to view.*

*Oh, beautiful beyond my expectation,
As ancient splendors hid from eyes of men,
Gleam through the brightening skies of restoration,
'Til God can say that earth is good again.*



Glassport Church Building on Ohio Avenue

Chorus:

'Til God can say that earth is good again,

'Til Eden's blessings we again obtain;

We shall rend the evil shroud, dissipate the hovering cloud;

'Til God can say that earth is good again.

The Glassport brothers and sisters met in many places in town. Then around 1935, they had a desire to have their own building. Construction began in 1937 under the leadership of Brothers Isaac Smith and Anthony DiBattista, with help from the membership, at a cost of \$23,000. The Branch was dedicated in October of 1938, with a membership of 93.

THE MONONGAHELA BRANCH

The Monongahela Branch actually had its beginning in 1864 when a schoolhouse was rented in the village of nearby Mingo in which to preach the Gospel. Their first contribution towards spreading the Gospel was made at the Conference of January 1870 when the Mingo-Monongahela City Branch offered to donate the large sum (for that day) of \$100 to pay the expenses of "setting free an elder to visit all the branches of the Church." Brother William Bickerton was then set aside by anointing and laying on of hands to visit all branches for a period of one year.

The membership of Monongahela grew to 122 by the year 1875. Because of the movement of many members from the Eastern Branches to the gathering of the Church in Kansas, however, Monongahela became dormant for a few years. With the return of Brother Thomas Spence and help from Brothers Alexander Cherry, John Ashton, and William Cadman, the Branch flourished again. In 1897, a conference was held there once again.

"They That Wait Upon the Lord Shall Renew Their Strength"

His favorite passage was, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall

run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah. 40:31). Evangelist and gifted preacher, Brother James Heaps was born on July 5, 1893 in Yorkshire, England. He and his father set sail for the land of America in 1906 when he was only 13 years old because his father was no longer able to find work in their homeland. After obtaining a job and a place to live, they sent for his mother and younger brother.

They lived in a town called Black Diamond, near Monongahela, with his father working in a coal mine and young James in a glass-making shop. James seriously injured his eye on the job, which kept him home for a while. It was during this time, on a Sunday afternoon, that Brothers Alexander Cherry, Clyde Gibson, Joseph Tucker, Sr., and others from the Church held an open-air meeting under a big tree not far from their house. According to Brother Heaps:

... It started to rain. My father, having been a religious man all his life, called them and said: “Come over here and hold your meeting in our house, for our house is always open to the people of God.” We were Baptist at this time. So they came in, and for the first time we heard the Restored Gospel preached, and my father said: “I never heard it like this before.” They asked my father if they could anoint me for my eye and he told them to go ahead, and today I still have sight in that eye, though it was badly burned.

My father and mother obeyed the Gospel, but I opposed it. When the saints came to our home for [a] meeting, I walked out. My father made me carry notes inviting all our neighbors to these meetings, and I had to carry chairs for the old folks to sit on when they had open-air meetings; but I never did this cheerfully, for I wanted nothing to do with these people. But one night my mother said: “Jim, it doesn’t look right for you to always walk out when the saints come in, won’t you stay . . . for this meeting tonight?” So, for mother’s sake I stayed. . . . It was the night that God took hold of my heart. . . . When my mother bore her testimony, I could stand no more but went out to the back of the house and knelt on the boardwalk and threw my hands up to heaven and cried to God to have mercy on me, a sinner.

The next day mother said: “Jim, don’t you want to be baptized?” I told her, “Yes,” and to tell them to come and baptize me; and they did, on one of the coldest nights in February. The ice was flowing down the

Monongahela River, but I never suffered any harm from it. . . . (Cadman History, pp. 350-351)

He was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ in 1911, and he was ordained an Elder the next year. He traveled extensively for the Church and even returned to his native England to preach the Restored Gospel there. Wherever he went, his exuberance and straightforward manner were always prominent.

Brother Heaps had memorized many passages from the Word of God and would often recite them in his sermons. He was also well known for his love of singing hymns of praise. He was sometimes called a “singing evangelist” because of his ability to sing solos and with others spontaneously as the occasion presented itself.

It seems rather appropriate that he passed away while on missionary work at the San Carlos Indian Reservation in Arizona. He had been a frequent visitor there and was always well-received. The Lord called him home suddenly as he was conversing about the scriptures, having preached the night before on the promise of eternal life awaiting those who obey all the commandments of our Creator.

Brother Heaps had been the presiding elder of various branches of the Church. He had also served as president of the California District. Prior to his move to California in the 1940s, he and his family had resided in Pennsylvania and Detroit, Michigan.

“I Had Only a Few More Hours to Live”

Over the years the saints have been given many remarkable experiences, which have provided an ever-expanding view of the glory and majesty of God. One outstanding example of this was shared by Filomina Rullo many years ago. She and her husband, who were both members of the Catholic Church, were born in Italy, and immigrated to America in 1912. Filomina writes:

I began to lose my health, and by 1916 I was bedfast. This condition lasted for most of seven long years. As a last resort, a specialist was called in. He told my husband that I had only a few more hours to live.

Three weeks before this, unknown to me, Brother Sam Verducci of the Dunlevy Branch, later known as Roscoe, had an experience. A heavenly messenger visited him in a dream telling him that someone in Monongahela was in great need of God and that he should go there. [At first] Brother Sam did not heed the words of the messenger. This experience was repeated two more times during the next three weeks, and the messenger told Brother Sam that God would lead him to the family that needed His help.

We were startled when, at 9:00 a.m. on April 18, 1923, a stranger knocked at our door. He introduced himself and began relating the experience he had. From the bedroom, I heard [his] voice and I called to my husband. We were amazed because this was the first time I had been able to speak for several days. At my insistence, my husband dressed me and carried me into the kitchen, and for six hours I heard the Scriptures expounded, as I had never heard before. Brother Sam related the way of salvation according to the true Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was deeply touched when he told of God's healing power, and I believed every word he spoke. I even promised to attend his Church on Sunday, if it would be the will of God.

Immediately after Brother Sam left our house, I felt a divine peace spreading over my entire body, and my sickness began leaving me. Within the hour I was able to walk outside. . . . When my husband told me how close I had been to dying, I realized that something supernatural had taken place. The following day, I was able to get my children off to school, bake bread, and cook supper. I . . . was feeling better and better.

When Sunday came, Brother Verducci was there to take me to his Church. For the first time in my life, I witnessed the Spirit of God being made manifest in the hymns and testimonies. . . . Later that afternoon I witnessed four baptisms and was amazed. . . .

As soon as I returned home, I related all the happenings of the day to my husband, who had not attended the meeting with me. I told him that I felt this was the True Church of Jesus Christ and that the pure love of God was there with these humble people.

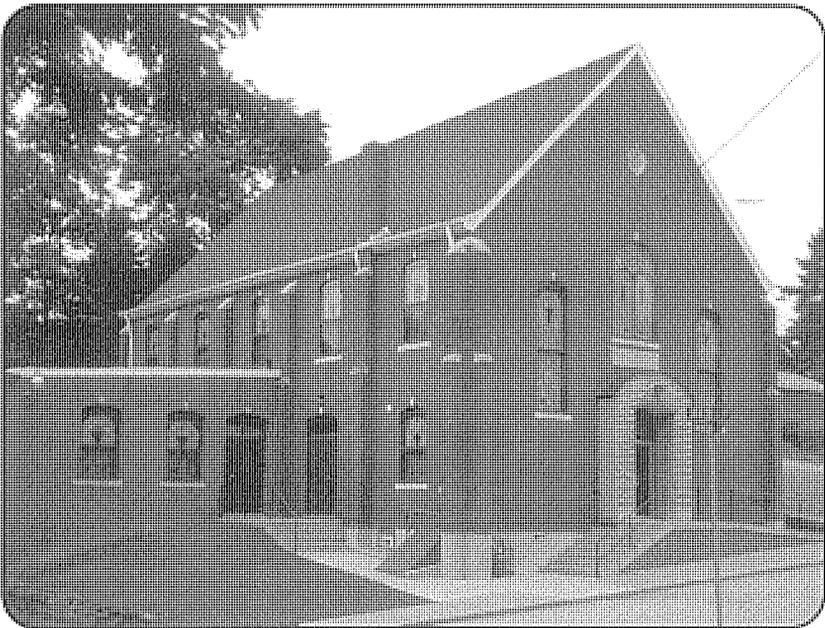
Before I went to bed that night, I prayed to the Lord, asking Him if I should join this Church. The answer came by way of a dream. A man dressed in a white robe appeared unto me. He was surrounded by a bright light, and I knew that this was Jesus Christ. He called me by name and asked if I would promise to go to The Church of Jesus Christ on Sunday and be baptized. I answered affirmatively. Then three times He asked if I truly believed in Him and repented of my sins. Three

times I answered, "Yes." I was then told to raise my right hand, and as I did, the spirit of repentance came down upon me so forcibly that I began to cry in my sleep. When my husband awakened me, I related my dream to him, and he said he had heard me talking in my sleep. He then told of a dream he had in which he walked into a cave lined with shining gold. In the cave was a baby lying in a manger, surrounded by sheep. . . . Then and there we both decided to be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ.

On Sunday, April 29th, 1923 my husband and I were baptized in the Monongahela River. . . . A year after my baptism, I met the doctor who had given up hope for me. He was shocked to see me alive and quite healthy. He wanted to know how I had survived my grave ordeal, and I told him of the Great Physician in Heaven who has the power to heal all who believe in Him. . . . (*The Gospel News*, September 1964)

Sister Rullo lived for many years after her healing.

At the Conference of 1928, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles proposed to build a suitable place in the East in which to hold our Confer-



Monongahela Church Building on Sixth and Lincoln

ences. Monongahela was chosen as the site, and the General Church Headquarters was built. This was a relief for the members of Monongahela who had been meeting in the Oddfellows Lodge Hall. During this period, many of the elders could be seen preaching on the street corners of the city.

The Great Depression did not hinder the members from giving what they could afford, and they labored diligently to complete the structure at Sixth and Lincoln Streets, at a cost of \$14,500. The building was dedicated on October 19, 1930.

Along with several other branches and missions in Western Pennsylvania, Monongahela enjoyed a remarkable revival in the mid-1950s, especially among the young people. In 1956 and 1957 alone, there were 59 baptisms, 32 of which were among the youth! In retrospect, since this spiritual harvest was so fruitful and abundant, it is worth considering the factors that contributed to it. Of course, it would be presumptuous to say for sure, but the record does give us some helpful indications.

First of all, it was at a time when a great deal of missionary fervor and activity was emanating from this Branch. The work among the Seed of Joseph, which was being actively pursued, primarily in South Dakota, was under the Monongahela Branch at that time. The ministry, especially the evangelists and apostles, provided the leadership, making trips there and reporting back encouraging news of baptisms and blessings. The Book of Mormon was not just being taught but was being believed and put into action, and the fruit was evident to all.

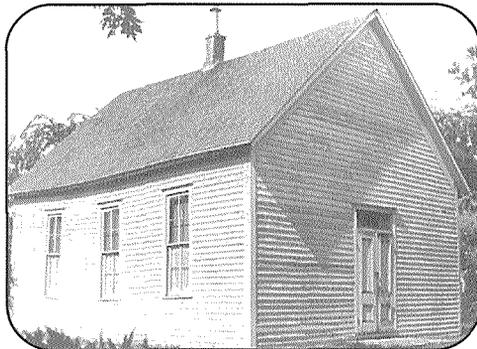
Monongahela was also a center of activity for the work in Africa, which was still in the early stages of development. Once again, the ministry was leading the way, with the Missionary Benevolent Association (MBA), Sunday School, and Ladies Circle all playing a supportive role. The President of the Church, Brother William H. Cadman, traveled to Africa, even though he was advancing in age. He was accompanied by Apostle Joseph Bittinger. Those who were not directly involved were contributing in other ways, such as fund-raising.

During this time, the branch choir, under the directorship of Ruth Mountain, was active and growing. This was becoming an exciting focus for Church involvement and outreach for many of the families and young people. At the same time, the MBA was also very active and was another catalyst for youth involvement in the Church.

The St. John, Kansas Mission

William Bickerton led a group of saints to a place they named Zion's Valley, in Stafford County, Kansas, arriving in April 1875. These hardy pioneers had to endure many harsh winters, as well as other hardships, to establish The Church of Jesus Christ in the nation's heartland. By the early 1900s, St. John (as it was later named) had become a thriving and prosperous city, with a growing Church membership of over 100, and close to 40 children attending Sunday School. New families from the east continued to arrive after the turn of the century. Among the newcomers were the Frys, Lynches, Morgans, Skillens, Bartles, Sanders, Maxwells, and Wrights, as well as the William H. Cadman family. Brother Will's brother, Alma, who had been in charge of the Church "Colony" in Comanche County, Kansas, also moved to St. John shortly thereafter.

In those days, many of the older members of the Church were called aunt or uncle, reflecting the family-type atmosphere that quickly developed. The Church was blessed with the manifestation of all the gifts of the Spirit, including the gifts of prophecy, visions, tongues, interpreta-



Old St. John Mission Building



St. John Mission on Easter Sunday 1951, when the Lord healed Sister Eva Bair. Children are Melinda and Stuart Underwood. Front row: Marjorie Hess, Joy Clements, Louise Robinson, Eva Sanders, Eva Bair, Sis Jones, Phyllis Wergin (only her head seen), Amelia Wergin, Reece Jones, Ed Wergin. Second row: Lydia Robinson, Dixie Underwood, Hettie Fry (hidden), Charlie Sanders, Alex Robinson and Pera Kirkpatrick

tion of tongues, and healing. One particularly memorable experience occurred some time around 1910 when the son of Brother Allen Wright, an apostle of the Church, was trampled by his horse. He was sent to Topeka for medical care, and subsequently returned home with the grim prognosis that he would not survive his injuries. His father stated, "There is still a God in heaven who hears and answers prayer" and called the saints to a fast and prayer meeting. God heard them and completely healed the young man.

Charlie Sanders was very impressed with the healing. He petitioned God to reveal himself to him, which He did in the form of a dream, where he found himself in a Church service back in Pennsylvania, with Brother Alexander Cherry in charge of the meeting. Someone spoke in the gift of tongues, and a visitor rose stating this was just gibberish and had no place in Church. Charlie said, "I was thrown on my feet declaring that these gifts and blessings were from God and would endure so long as there was a faithful man left upon the face of the earth." As he was not yet baptized, he wondered where this strength came from. Looking back, he saw Christ standing by the door. He smiled at Charlie, and revealed to

him the circumstances and duration of the First and Second World Wars, as well as the Vietnam War.

Many years later, circa 1949, in an afternoon meeting on Sunday, an elderly woman about 90 years old came into the meeting, stating she would like to be baptized. She said that 24 years earlier she had been healed of typhoid fever, relating an incredible story of God's grace. At that time she was living with a family who were not members of the Church. When she became delirious, they called for Brother Jimmy Skillen to come and anoint her, which he did, commanding her to arise in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. After Brother Skillen left, she went into the other room where the owners of the home lived. They tried to put her back in bed, thinking she was still delirious; but she began to praise God, loudly declaring that she had been healed. These are just a few of the many blessings and wonders that accompanied the growth of the Church in the State of Kansas.



St. John Mission, August 1959

THE ROSCOE BRANCH

(Formerly Lucyville)

The Roscoe Branch, formerly known as Lucyville, is one of the earliest in the Church, beginning in 1886. Conference minutes report Brother Cadman, Sr. assisting in this mission and Brother Benjamin Meadowcroft assigned to Roscoe in 1888. Brother Alexander Cherry reported holding meetings here every Sabbath.

Organization of the first Missionary Benevolent Association (MBA) in the Church took place in Roscoe on June 16, 1905, by Brother Alexander Cherry, then President of the Church. One of the interesting rules in those days was an initiation fee of \$.25 to become a member of the MBA; dues were \$.15 a month. Members were charged one cent for being late.

Older brothers and sisters have related that Brother Cherry stood on a box and preached the Gospel on street corners in Roscoe. He was well respected by the people in town and was often invited to speak in their churches.

The first *Gospel News*, known as *The Gospel Reflector*, was printed at the Roscoe Ledger in August 1905.

Brothers John K. Penn and John R. Ward were both ordained apostles from this branch. The saints met in homes for a while and then in a schoolhouse in Dunlevy for several years. Many asked for their baptisms there after only attending a few meetings, as the power of God was so great among them.

“The Healing of My Soul Means So Much More Than the Healing of My Body”

Brother Thurman and Sister Birdie Furnier attended this Branch when it was known as Lucyville and Dunlevy. A brief account of Brother Thurman's life is provided in the Chapter on Leadership, later on in this volume. In the account provided below, Sister Birdie testifies that there were two occasions when she heard the voice of the Lord.

“Is Thy Heart Right With God?”

According to Sister Birdie Furnier, she was reared by parents who read and believed the Bible, teaching her to place her full trust in the Lord. She received her first experience when she was 26 years old, married with two children, living in a little country home on about five acres of land not far from Uniontown, Pennsylvania. In her own words:

... I respected all churches and never found fault with any. I thought they were all right, and to this day I believe there are good people in every church. Now I want to give my testimony as to how I came to belong to The Church of Jesus Christ. Being alone in my humble little farm home, I was very busy [with housework] and singing the Hymn “Is Thy Heart Right With God, Washed in His Crimson Blood.” A voice spoke to me aloud. It was right beside me, very distinct, filled with love and kindness beyond explanation. The voice said, “Is thy heart right with God?” I knew it was something from heaven, something I had never witnessed before; I knew it was the voice of the Lord. I fell on my knees, and I talked to God. I said, “Lord, I know this is You. What will You have me do?” As I prayed there alone, a blanket of love completely covered me. I left myself in His care. (*The Gospel News*, December 1964, pp. 6-8)

Not fully understanding what it all meant, Sister Birdie shared her experience with her mother, Mrs. Rosalie Rikken. It just so happened that Mrs. Rikken had recently met a woman named Mary Ann King, and had mentioned to her “that she did not know of any Church that was built upon the plan as laid down by Jesus Christ.” Whereupon Mrs. King replied, “You would be satisfied with the church I belong to; it is The Church of Jesus Christ, and my husband is an elder in the Church.” So it was that when Mrs. Rikken heard her daughter tell of this divine visitation, she was reminded of Sister Mary Ann and suggested that Birdie visit her. Following her mother’s counsel, Birdie went to the King’s home, only to find that Sister Mary Ann was not there. She did, however, have an opportunity to visit with her husband, Brother Martin King, who asked whether she would be willing to permit them to hold meetings in her home, to which she agreed.

Sister Birdie continues with her account:

On Sunday, August 23, 1914, the meeting was held in the home of my sister, Alverdia Gibson. A wonderful blessing was being poured out upon us. While Brother William Bailey was bearing his testimony, I was filled with a portion of my earlier experience, when God's voice had asked me if my heart was right with Him. The spirit of repentance fell upon me. I felt as if I was right in front of Jesus at his feet. I asked for my baptism, and seven of my family followed: my husband, Thurman; my sister, Alverdia; her husband, Henry Gibson; my sister, Gladys; her husband, Ray Hillen; and my youngest brother, Winfield Riggen.

“Now is the Time”

Two weeks after Sister Furnier was baptized she became very ill. She testified that up to that time she had enjoyed remarkably good health all her life. In her own words:

My illness all started with typhoid fever, which left me a complete cripple unable to raise my hands. They fed me soup, which was strained through a cloth. I was completely helpless and weighed less than 75 pounds.

When the next January Conference came, I wanted to go. My mother and father disagreed about taking me out in the snow and ice in January. My mother said I would not recover anyway, so she arranged with a farm neighbor to take me to the railroad station at McKeesport, Pennsylvania. . . . I was rolled in blankets and carried like a baby to a horse and buggy, and carried into the depot. When the train came, the conductor helped the farmer put me on the train. When I got off the train, Brother Nephi Federer's son was there with a horse and buggy, and they carried me from the train just as they had carried me when I got on the train. I was taken to conference, which was held on the second floor of a lodge hall. I was carried up 18 steps and set on a chair, with my feet on another chair. . . . On Saturday night they got me a room close to the hall and on Sunday I was carried back upstairs for Sunday meetings. There were about 300 people there. . . .

I had been anointed by just about all the twelve apostles and by our president, Brother Alexander Cherry, during those months of sickness, but had not been healed or even benefited. . . . When the afternoon meeting opened for testimony and sacrament, a voice spoke to me. I

recognized it as the same voice that had spoken to me when I was alone in my little farm home. It said, "Now is the time." I spoke right out and said "Brothers, if you will anoint me, now is the time." Two elders came back to me and carried me to the front of the hall. They anointed me with oil and made a very simple plain prayer, with their hands on my head. I was completely healed right there, and restored back to perfect health. I got up from the chair I was sitting on, walked back to my seat, and went home with the crowd in perfect health. The next day was Monday. I went back home on the train, walked two miles to my home in the country, and have been blessed with good health ever since.

I feel that God has spoken to me twice in a very special way in the 50 years I have tried to serve Him. The first time He spoke to me asking the question, "Is your heart right with God? . . . in preparation for the saving of [your] soul." The second time was for the healing of my body. . . . The healing of my soul means so much more than the healing of my body. (*The Gospel News*, December 1964, pp. 6-8)

The Move to Roscoe

The brothers and sisters greatly desired a building of their own to meet in and bought a lot in Roscoe because most of the members were living in that area. They erected a house of worship in 1949. The total cost of construction was approximately \$7,700, and it was built almost entirely by brothers of the Church. On January 1, 1950, the saints met to dedicate their new building. It was a new year, a new building, but the same old Gospel.

The speakers were Brothers Isaac Smith and William H. Cadman, Church President, who spoke briefly on the 66th Chapter of Isaiah—the meaning of the Church and where the Spirit resides. Precious memories of earlier days were recalled by all the speakers that day, and Brother Will told of attending conferences in Roscoe when it was known as Lucyville. There were afternoon and evening services, as well, on dedication day. Others who expressed themselves were Brothers Teman Cherry, Charles Ashton, Idris Martin, and Joseph Bittinger.

The saints from Roscoe recall a brother being converted through the gift of tongues many years ago. The interpretation was, "This man will ask for his baptism before he leaves this room." Not fully convinced and

thinking the members were trying to hurry him, he said to himself, “We’ll just see about that.” When the meeting was over and all were ready to leave, he still sat in his chair. He just could not get up. He realized that, if he expected to get up, he would have to ask for his baptism. When he made the decision, he was released and became a firm believer in all the gifts and was faithful to the end of his life.

Revival

It should be noted that Roscoe was one of several branches that caught the spiritual fire that was blazing through other nearby branches in Pennsylvania in the mid-fifties. The records show that there were 22 baptisms between 1956 and 1958.

Experience of Brother Gasper Karelli

Brother Gasper Karelli, an Elder at the Roscoe Branch, testified that after coming into the Church, a brother visited his home and suggested that he purchase a Bible to keep in his home, as meetings were often held in their homes. Brother Karelli stated he never went to school and could not read nor write in Italian or English and signed his name with an “X” mark. He said he wanted to be obedient; and, if it was good to own a Bible, he would buy one, which he did. Shortly thereafter he felt a desire to pick up the Bible, and upon doing so, to his utter amazement he began to read. His wife called him for dinner, but he couldn’t lay the book down as he was feasting on the written Word, which he had never done before. He later testified that he had a dream in which he was presented a Bible written in English and told to read it three different times in the dream. He said he refused the first two times, saying that he could not read English, then the third time he finally opened the book and began to read. He stated he believed this is why it was harder for him to read the Bible in English, as he did not obey the first time. This is how Brother Karelli “learned” to read in both Italian and English—he just opened the scriptures and began reading them as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

THE ALIQUIPPA BRANCH

The Aliquippa Branch had its beginning with the baptisms of Brother Philip and Sister Rose Mileco in March 1920 at Youngstown, Ohio. The Milecos were introduced to the Church by the testimonies of relatives and friends. In turn, their neighbors and friends responded to their testimonies.

Meetings were held in the homes of the saints starting in 1921. In 1924, the mission rented a vacant room on Erie Avenue in West Aliquippa near the railroad tracks. Soon the small group decided to purchase that building. Five brothers, (Philip Mileco, Anthony Jackman, Domenic Jackman, Michael DeFrancesco and Anthony Palmieri) each bore an equal share of the cost.

In 1944, the Branch grew and the need for a larger building moved the saints to purchase a spacious, one-story brick structure on Main Street, West Aliquippa. Later in 1946 a GMBA Conference was held in Aliquippa with a large turnout.

In 1951, four young men from the Aliquippa Branch were inducted into the military to fight in the Korean War. It was, of course, cause for much rejoicing when they returned home safely at the end of the hostilities in 1953. Only one of them, Feo Rossi, was wounded, but thankfully he made a complete recovery.

During the war years and through the early fifties, the branch grew slowly; however, 1956 ushered in a period of revival, especially among



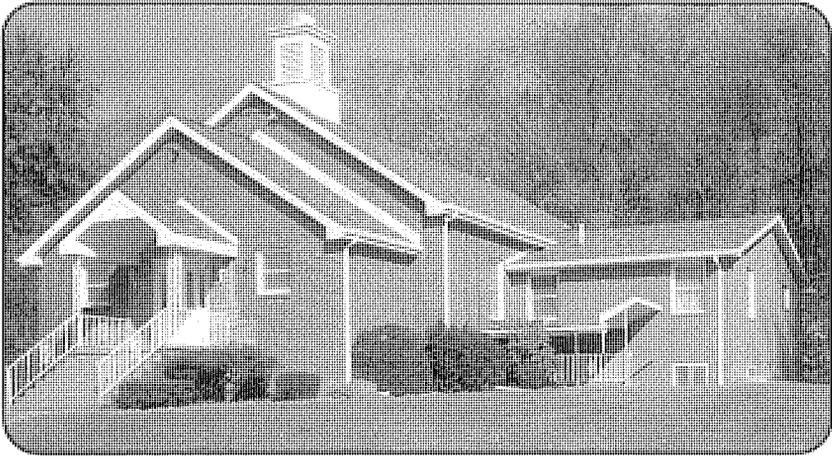
West Aliquippa Church Building on Erie Avenue

the young people—leading to 16 baptisms that year, and six the next. Many of the youth, who were now giving their lives to the Lord, were the second generation in The Church of Jesus Christ—children of the large wave of converts who had come into the Church during the twenties and thirties. Now their children were reaching adulthood and were having their own experiences and revelations concerning the truth of the Gospel, rather than relying on those of their parents.

The primary catalyst in this movement? The record shows that the MBA played a significant role, with the Aliquippa Branch hosting a spirit-filled General Missionary Benevolent Association Conference (GMBA) in May of 1956, where there were four baptisms; and later on in the fall there was another GMBA gathering in New Jersey, with five baptisms resulting. It should also be noted that during this same summer, Brothers Dominic Thomas and Joseph Milantoni and their families came to visit the Aliquippa Branch. Following inspired sermons by these young men, six more people asked to be baptized. Evidently, there was a spiritual spillover from one branch to the next, especially among the young people, as most of the congregations throughout this entire region were also enjoying a season of revival.

What was not apparent from the record, however, but probably does more to explain this development than anything else, came by way of an interview. Brother Paul Palmieri, who just happened to be one of the individuals baptized during this period, explained that their parents had gone into mighty fasting and prayer on behalf of their children, and it wasn't long before they began to reap a bountiful harvest. It's important to point out that we are still enjoying the fruits of their labors today, as many of these young people who gave their lives to the Lord then became missionaries and leaders in the Church later on, touching many lives along the way. Five of them would eventually be called into the ministry, including one evangelist, Brother Joseph Ross, and one apostle, Brother Paul Palmieri.

The original owner of the Aliquippa Church building proposed to buy back the Main Street structure, and the Branch agreed to sell. In



Aliquippa Church Building

1957, ground was broken for the new and present building, with the foundation being dug on May 23. Construction was done by the members of the branch, with the electrical wiring installed by brothers from New Jersey, the heating system installed by brothers from Ohio, and the plastering done by brothers from Michigan. During construction, the members labored six days a week on the Church building, and the branch continued to grow as they met in a rented hall. The Sabbath services were filled with the Spirit of God, and they were blessed with several ordinations including the ordination of Brother John Ross, Sr., as an evangelist. On Sunday, February 23, 1958, the new building was dedicated, with Brother William H. Cadman giving the dedicatory address.

The Branch has always supported and maintained the auxiliaries of the Church: the Ladies Uplift Circle, MBA, and Sunday School; and in 1957 they started a Men's Bible Class, which has been very instrumental in encouraging the brothers to dig more into the Word of God.

The Testimony of John Ross, Sr.

The Church of Jesus Christ was given power from its founder Jesus Christ to cast out devils and unclean spirits. I bear testimony to this by

my personal experience when I began to attend services in the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Mission in 1928.

As I look back on my childhood years, I admit much evil grew within me as I advanced in years. There was also some good, or a little of the fear of God as taught by my parents and those around me. As years passed, evil grew within me far more than good.

Previous to my eighteenth birthday, I began to court my wife, Mary. Meanwhile, a strange spirit was gaining control over me, a spirit of evil, which caused me to lose reason in many instances. Not long after my wife and I married, we made our home with my parents in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. After our marriage, this evil spirit within me began to increase, and after two years, my life was one of misery for [me] and my young wife, (who was also a mother at this time), and for those near and dear to me.

Now I will relate what happened to me that caused me to state that The Church of Jesus Christ was given power to cast out devils and unclean spirits. In 1925-1926, some of my relatives began to attend services in the Aliquippa Mission of the Church under the leadership of Brother Philip J. Mileco. Eventually, some were baptized and they began to speak to my mother about the Church. Mother began to attend services and later my wife began to accompany her. They were doing this secretly for they feared my father and [me]. They feared what we would do or say if we learned they were among a people being ridiculed and spoken evil of. My mother and wife knew we did not want them to associate with such people. Eventually, my mother was baptized without telling my father. My father became very angry and violent when he learned of this. I also became angry. After mother came home from the services on her baptismal day, she took my young son in her arms. As she did this, I went to her and roughly took my child from her and said, "Today you have disowned me and my son by what you have done. I forbid you to touch my child anymore." You can well imagine mother's feelings under the circumstances.

As time passed, my feelings toward mother were not as drastic; nevertheless, I would do things to test her to see if I could cause her to swear or curse. Then I could tell her she was only putting on an act and trying to deceive us by her new way of life. To my surprise or amazement, there was something quite different now in mother. Meanwhile, my wife attended Church openly. I ceased opposing her, due to the change in mom's way of living. Finally, I decided to go to Church and investigate if what people were saying about those people were true. If so, I

would stop my wife from going with mom, and influence my father to stop mom, also.

One evening (it had to be night, for I did not want to be seen), I attended the services in the little Church building near the railroad tracks. To my surprise, I found everyone orderly and what the ministers taught was Godly. Seeing and hearing this, I became convinced what people were saying were lies, and these people were being accused falsely.

Not long after, my wife and I attended a movie called, "King of Kings." It was about the life of our Savior, and this movie further convinced me mother's Church was doing things as I had seen in this movie.

Then I began to attend services and associate with these people, and a feeling came within me that was good. But another feeling within me would revolt against the good feeling to the extent that I would be tormented and feel uncomfortable. That evil spirit within me caused me to be uncomfortable and tormented me to the extent that I began to think I had better cease listening to these things and associating with these people.

One Sunday afternoon after the morning services, my mother invited me to return with her to the afternoon services to observe as they partook of the Lord's Supper. . . . (I had never been in an afternoon service.) I replied loud and with emphasis, "If that Church can take away this cancer that's eating me up, then I will believe in it." I was referring to that evil spirit that was consuming me inwardly as being like a cancer. I could see my life was one of misery and torment and in some instances it even tempted me to commit murder. My mother, hearing what I said, insisted that I go with her to the afternoon services, which I did.

While the afternoon service was in progress and they were singing beautifully, suddenly I found myself standing and screaming. I was seeing a creature before me resembling [me] with distorted features and hands reaching out to grasp me. I was trying to get away from this creature, shielding myself with my hands before me and screaming very loud. How long this took place, I do not know, only those that were at that meeting can answer. It is essential that I inform my readers what I am relating is not imagination or emotionalism, but a reality. The evil spirit within me actually came out and appeared before me.

Finally, the spirit before me departed and I stopped screaming. I found myself exhausted and breathing heavily from exertion. I sat down again, and, as I was recuperating from the experience, something else was

happening within me. The devil was dissatisfied with what had happened to me, that the Lord had proven this Church could remove the evil from within me. The devil began to speak to me saying, "See what happened to you in here? Get up and get out, don't stay here any longer." But thank God another Spirit would speak to me saying, "No! Do not leave this place. If you do, you will never come back again; you stay right here."

I was grasping the sides of my chair in order to remain. Again, how long this struggle took place, I cannot say. Nevertheless, I yielded to the voice of God or that good Spirit that entices men to do good, and I did not leave. After I yielded to the Spirit that wanted me to remain, a peace and calm came over me. It was something wonderful, which I had never known or felt before in my life. Yes, that evil spirit I had referred to as cancer consuming me had departed from me and God had now shown the power in the Church of His Son had done it.

After the meeting was dismissed, we returned home. As I observed myself in the mirror, I exclaimed to my wife, "Look at me! I look different!" My features were of a person feeling a peace inwardly and it was very noticeable outwardly, something new. Not only did I notice this, but my wife and mother confirmed I looked different, as a change had come on my features. As I write this, I must pause to thank God for restoring His Church and giving it power to cast out devils and unclean spirits.

Then I enjoyed peace of heart and mind and acknowledged the power of God in the Church which had brought about these things in my life. I purchased a Bible and began to read it. What I read confirmed what the Church was teaching. I was convinced baptism was essential for the remission of sins and prepared to be baptized, which I did shortly. On the day prior to my baptism the devil, knowing what was going to happen, manifested his power once again by seeking to destroy me, but by the grace of God, everything turned out well.

When baptized and confirmed a member of the Church, I experienced a new birth, such as the Savior taught: that is, born of the water and of the spirit. And now people began to speak evil of me also, because I was going to the Church, but I did not care. The Church to me became the most precious thing in my life, for it is through the power of God in the Church that my life has been changed to a life of peace, contentment, and happiness. One week later, my wife was also baptized.

And now, imagine what would have happened if that evil spirit which possessed me had continued to control me. I can only say, "Lord

spare everyone from such a power and may everyone serve thee." Yes, some people can help themselves by yielding to God's commandments, but there are those who are helpless and they need God's help more than others. Who could have instilled reason in the mind of the man possessed of legions of devils? He was beyond human help and if Jesus had not intervened the spirits that possessed him would have eventually destroyed him. But when Jesus did intervene, the man was found sitting at the feet of Jesus and in his right mind. Jesus did the same for me, Thank God!

Experience of Brother Louis DeLuca

In the late summer of 1932, I was unemployed as were many others during the Great Depression. With no income, a wife and five children to provide for, I did not know what to do.

One evening before retiring, I poured out my heavy heart to God in prayer, asking for His help and providence for employment. While praying, I felt a light tap on my shoulder and a voice spoke audibly "Fear Not." I was greatly encouraged.

The next day, I went to the employment office of a local steel company, as did many others. While in the crowded room, the employment officer called out my name, "Louis DeLuca." I approached him and he led me into his office. He told me, "Mr. DeLuca, I had a dream last night in which a personage appeared to me and informed me that I should give you a job." He hired me immediately as a bricklayer, which was my trade. I was so grateful to God to be working and able to provide for my family. My family, co-workers and my brothers and sisters were pleasantly surprised at my obtaining employment at a time when jobs were so hard to come by.

I praise God for His favor and Providence in answering prayers.

THE MCKEES ROCKS BRANCH HISTORY

The Church was planted in McKees Rocks in 1923. Brothers Dominick Dintino and Tony DiBattista came from Glassport to visit Guiseppe Casasanta in Coraopolis. He was a boarder in the home of Grazio DiRusso, as was his brother-in-law, Nunzio Belmonte, and while there, Brother Dintino shared with them the message of the Restored Gospel.

Grazio DiRusso was baptized on January 3, 1923. Three more, Nunzio Belmonte, Guiseppa Casasanta and Grazio DiRusso's brother were baptized on June 17. On Sundays, they would meet with the saints in West Aliquippa.

Brother Tony DiBattista described those early days as follows:

On another visit Brother Dintino and I went to Pittock, Pennsylvania to visit Nick DiVito and his family. It was about 9:30 am and Sister Mary DiVito had just gotten out of bed and received us with great joy. While we were speaking of the Restored Gospel, the blessing of God fell upon us. In our talk we told her that when we were gone, to go to God in prayer in the name of Jesus, to ask God who we are. She put her both hands on her head and said, "Oh! I don't have to go to the Lord to ask who you are. Just before I got up out of bed two young pigeons were flying in my bedroom, and they both landed, one on each side of my pillow, that showed me that they represent you two, because you have brought peace into my home." Not long after this Brother Nicole and Sister Mary DiVito were baptized. Brother Nicole became a deacon of the Church.

At this same place we crossed back over the railroad where two old people, the Raffaele Deramo's, lived. They had a ferocious dog, and, as we walked on the sidewalk the dog followed us, and, when we knocked at the door, they opened for us in a hurry because of the dog. When we got in they marveled because the dog did not harm us. We told them that he followed us like a little lamb. Later these two became baptized and also donated the lot where the Church is now built in Pittock, Pennsylvania.

During this time, Brother and Sister Dintino were also visiting some relatives in McKees Rocks and were trying to speak to them of the Gospel. They received opposition but were not discouraged. Brother and Sister Dintino offered fasting and prayer in behalf of this family. They said that we were the true servants of the Most High God, but it still was not enough to convince them of the Restored Gospel. A few weeks later Brother Dintino invited me to go with him to McKees Rocks to visit his relatives again. We visited Vincent Clemente first and, when we knocked at the door, he just opened it enough to look at us with one eye. We spoke a few words, then we left and went to Vincent Clemente's sister, not too far from his place. When we got there, we began to explain the Gospel and, as we were talking, her daughter came out of the

bedroom with her face all wrapped with a woolen cloth. She was in misery. She said, "I'm suffering a lot with a toothache; I went to the doctor but he wouldn't touch it because it was too dangerous. I went to the dentist and he wouldn't touch it because it was too swollen." When we looked at her face, we could see she was really in great pain. Brother Dintino got the little bottle of olive oil out of his pocket and said to her, "Put a drop of this oil on the tip of your finger and put it on your tooth." She did this, and, when she touched her tooth with the oil, the tooth jumped out by itself. This miracle brought a change to the whole family. This was Sister Anna Colangelo, mother-in-law of Brother Dan Casasanta. Because of the manifestation of the glory of God through his Son, Jesus Christ, all this family was baptized in the Lord. After this, we visited Brother Clemente again and he gave us a welcome. Shortly after, he was baptized, too, and the work of the Restored Gospel prospered.

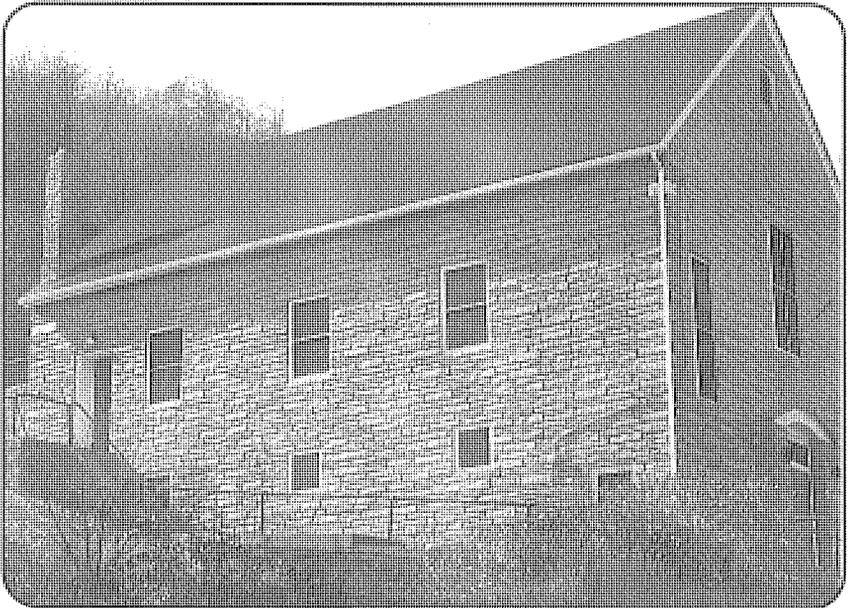
On July 6, 1929, McKees Rocks was organized as a Mission with a membership of 18, including one elder, under the jurisdiction of the Glassport Branch, with Brother Vincent Clemente as the presiding officer. The saints met in each other's homes and finally rented a storeroom located at the corner of Island and Fleming. By the end of 1930, they had a membership of 22 and needed a meeting place. Brother Raffaele Deramo donated a piece of ground to build the Church, and the mission asked the Conference of April 4, 1931 for permission to build, which was granted.



Joanna and Vincent Clemente, circa 1945

A special meeting was held on April 30, 1931 to discuss the proposed building. Present were Brothers Dan Casasanta, Alma Nolfi, Joseph Capone, Nunzio Belmonte, Basilio DiMasso, R. Deramo, Nick DiVito, Frank Colangelo, and Vincent Clemente and Sisters G. Clemente and Filomena Clemente. After some discussion, it was decided by a unanimous vote to proceed as soon as possible. The building was completed in September 1931 at a cost of \$3,500, with a mortgage of \$2,500. Brother William H. Cadman, our General Church President was present at the dedication service in September 1931.

The McKees Rocks Mission was under the jurisdiction of the Glassport Branch from 1929 until 1942, at which time they were organized into a Branch on January 7, with a membership of about 50. Brother Vincent Clemente was Presiding Elder, and continued in this office until his death in 1955. Brother Dan Casasanta was First Counselor and Brother Anthony Nolfi was Second Counselor. Prior to this time, all the members were Italian; however, during the 1940s, an influx of other nationalities began, including Polish, Slavic, Croatian, Russian and German.



McKees Rocks Church Building on Island Avenue



Anna and Tony Nolfi, with granddaughter, Nina and daughter, Velia DiCenzio

During the mid-1950s, the McKees Rocks Branch was also caught up in the revival that swept other neighboring branches. There were 20 baptisms between 1955 and 1957, and a total of 40 throughout the entire decade, many of whom became leaders of the Church years later. Especially noteworthy is the fact that no less than nine of these young converts would one day go on to become ministers of the Gospel themselves, including the following five evangelists: Robert Buffington, Richard Christman, John Manes, Paul Ciotti, and Richard Lawson.

Experience of Sister Anna Frances Colangelo

The following experience was received by Sister Anna Frances Colangelo in the year of 1925, shortly after she was baptized into the Church and is related by her daughter, Sister Fannie Colangelo Casasanta.

We had a house rented to two tenants. One lived on the first floor and the other lived on the second. The second floor tenant did her laundry in her apartment instead of going to the basement. Each time she washed her clothes, some water would spill onto the floor and some of the water would soak on the ceiling in the downstairs apartment. After a time, the plaster started to crack and break and fall. The

wallpaper had gotten water soaked and began hanging. She had plaster dust on her furniture and floors. She stood it as long as she could and one Saturday afternoon she came to my mother and asked her to go down to see the damage that had been caused by the tenant on the second floor.

When the woman left, my mother started thinking that the following day would be feet-washing Sabbath. Since it was Saturday, she knew that she couldn't get anyone to repair the damage that day and it would bother her all day Sunday and she would not be able to fully enjoy the feet-washing service as she should. She sent my sister down to look at the plaster to see how much damage there was. When my sister returned with the message that it was really bad and dangerous and that the paper was hanging from the ceiling and pieces of plaster had fallen, my mother really got worried. When my father came home from work, she also sent him to see the damage. He also reported that it was dangerous and that my mother should have gone to see it. But again, my mother knew that she couldn't do anything about it that day so she prayed and put it in God's care and dismissed it from her mind. The next day, feet-washing Sabbath, it never came back to mind and she enjoyed the day and all the ordinances.

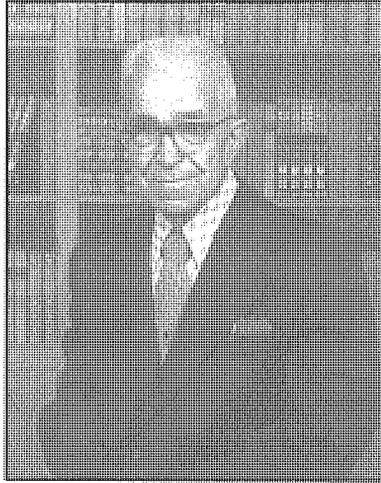
Early Monday morning, as she awakened, the first thing that came to mind was the broken plaster. She hurriedly went to the house and talked to the upstairs tenant and brought her downstairs to see the damage she had done by washing in the kitchen instead of going into the basement. The woman downstairs was glad to see them and took them in to see the damage.

The plaster had been repaired, the wallpaper didn't even have a water stain on it and there wasn't a speck of dust anywhere. My mother even took a broom handle and tapped on the ceiling and the ceiling was solid. The woman was amazed and shocked. She kept repeating—your daughter saw it, your husband saw it, I'm not lying. My mother knew that God had taken care of it. God had repaired the plaster, put up the wallpaper and even cleaned up the dust. Feet washing at our house was always special. That plaster was solid until we sold the house many years later.

Testimony of Basilio DiMasso by His Daughter Ann DiAntonio

Basilio DiMasso was born in Scanno, Province, Aquilia, Italy on June 18, 1888 and died on April 12, 1980.

Brother Joseph Capone brought the Gospel to our home. At the time, my Dad was a nonbeliever. Brother Joe brought the elders to talk to my parents, and Dad promised them he would go to Church. But the first Sunday he had a doctor's appointment for a liver condition that caused his skin to be "yellow like a lemon skin." He was to take his medication three times a day, but then, a little at a time, he forgot to take it. Finally he was scheduled to have an operation. All this time he never came to Church.



Basilio DiMasso

Then one Sunday morning, at 3:00 am, he was awake and thinking about the promise he had made to these men that he would go to Church. He thought my mother was asleep, but when she began to move, my father said, "Lucy, we should go visit the Church." My mother got up out of bed, and my father asked her where she was going. She said she was going to make a lunch but actually she went to thank God for touching my Dad's heart.

The first time they went to Church my father saw Brother Philip Mileco. He thought, "How is this man going to preach a sermon, he can't even read." A voice spoke to him and said, "Today you will hear a sermon that you have never heard before." They went to Church a couple of weeks. Dad asked for his baptism first, then everyone went to tell my Mom. She said, "I have been praying for this," and she asked for her baptism, too. They were baptized November 9, 1930. When my Mom was baptized and she was walking out of the water, she knelt down in the water, praising God. Brother Philip thought she [had fainted]. As my Dad came out of the water, Brother Philip turned to him and said, "Brother Buzzy, the color on your face has changed."

He never was operated on and never had any further trouble with his liver. He was an ordained deacon and spoke in the gift of tongues. He lived to be 92 years old.

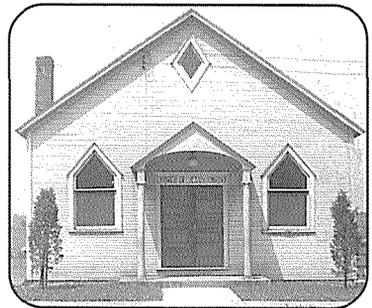
THE GREENSBURG BRANCH

The history of the Greensburg Branch can be traced to 1923 when two sisters from Glassport, Sisters Dintino and Dinino, came to the home of Patsy Fallavollitta, with a strong desire to introduce the Gospel. Because the prayer offered by one of these sisters prior to the serving of lunch greatly impressed those within the Fallavollitta household that day, it was suggested that a few brothers from Glassport go to their home and tell them of the Restored Gospel. Brothers Joseph Dulisse, Peter DePiro, and Anthony DiBattista went the following week. The next Sunday, Brothers DiBattista and Dulisse went to visit the family of James Lavelle. In the words of Brother Anthony:

We told her [Mrs. Lavelle], "When we go away from your home, go into a room of the house and pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and ask him who we represent. He will let you know the truth we speak." As soon as we said these words, she put her hands on her head and said, "Oh! Just before I got up out of my bed, two angels walked into my room and both spoke the same words that you speak to me now, so I know who you are."

Yet, it would be one more year before any were baptized. In 1924, Greensburg had 13 members, with meetings being held in the homes of the saints. The meeting place was then changed to a schoolhouse and remained there until June 7, 1942, when a Church was built on Broad Street in South Greensburg. It remained their meeting place until 1971, when it was sold and the brothers and sisters moved to the General Church Auditorium.

In 1949, Brothers John Stroko and Herman Loltig began to hold meetings in Somerset, Pennsylvania in an effort to spread the Restored Gospel in that area. Brother Herman continued to hold bimonthly meetings there until he passed away in 1957.



Greensburg Church Building

On October 27, 1953, the Greensburg Mission was established as a branch of the Church with the following officers:

Presiding Elder	Fred Fair
First Counselor	Alvin Swanson
Second Counselor	Anthony Todaro
Teachers	James Grazan and Dan Todaro

During the 1950s, the Washington D.C. Mission was placed under the authority of the Greensburg Branch with Brother George Timms as Presiding Elder. Supervision of the Mission was transferred to the Metuchen, New Jersey Branch in 1959.

The following brothers were presiding elders of the Greensburg Branch during this period: Alvin Swanson, James Grazan, and later on, Paul Gehly, who was ordained into the ministry in 1958.

One of the miracles witnessed during this time resulted from the ministry responding to a request to go to the hospital to anoint a five-year-old girl. The heartbroken mother had been advised by the doctor to buy a wheelchair for the child who was paralyzed from the waist down. Brother Fair and the girl's father were the only ones allowed in the room when she was anointed with oil. Praise God, when she left the hospital a few days later, she was able to walk into her home. This girl is now a mother of three children.

Another memorable experience took place the first time a Church conference was held in Greensburg. The three young sisters who were in charge of the meals became very concerned when the attendance far surpassed their expectations. However, they turned their hearts to the Lord, and He did not disappoint them. In fact, there was so much food for people to eat that all the members took some of the leftovers home with them.

THE VANDERBILT BRANCH

Brother Oran and Sister Katie Thomas were baptized into the Church on October 10, 1910 by Brother Charles Ashton and were members of the Mt. Pleasant (Hawkeye) Branch until 1925, when they moved to Smock, Pennsylvania, becoming members of that branch. In 1929, they moved to Vanderbilt, and shortly thereafter invited their friends and neighbors to attend a meeting they held in their yard. There were about 35 people at that meeting, and among them were Brothers Isaac Smith, Charles Ashton, and Tony DiBattista. The meetings continued and the first convert, Sister Ada Hawk, was baptized on June 28, 1931. Others were baptized, some that had fallen away were renewed, and they became a mission under the Glassport Branch. All their meetings were held in homes in those days.

Brothers Isaac Smith and William H. Cadman from the Monongahela Branch, and Brother Tony DiBattista from the Glassport Branch, were all instrumental in helping to get started in Vanderbilt, but it was Brother Oran Thomas who was the shepherd and spiritual father who pastored the congregation in those early days. Brother "Orrie," as he was called, was a slightly built man, not over 5'6" tall, weighing about 150 pounds. He was soft-spoken, never raising his voice. A coal miner, he had lost his sight in one eye in the mines. He was quite a humble man, and when he preached, you could tell by the tone of his voice and the spirit that he carried that he was firm in his convictions. He was ordained an elder in 1911, and later on an evangelist. He and his wife traveled many miles in the service of the Lord. Sister Katie made her own contribution to the Church, with a strong testimony for the Lord.

The second man who contributed greatly to the establishment and growth of the Vanderbilt Branch was Brother Joseph Shazer. He came to Vanderbilt from the old Smock Branch in the mid-1930s. He, too, was a coal miner, who sometimes spent as much time visiting the saints as he did on his regular shift at work. He and his wife, Sister Reba, gave their lives to the Church and its members. Anyone could call them at any time, day or night, if they were in trouble, and would know that they

would find a friend. Brother Joe evangelized the local area, in addition to making several trips to the Indian Reservations in South Dakota, as well as a trip to Nigeria, where he baptized hundreds. While he was in Nigeria, Sister Shazer suffered a stroke, from which she never recovered.

The Work of the Lord in the 1930s had its own set of challenges. With the entire country in an economic depression, there was little work and even less money. Most of the saints had to either use public transportation or walk. They lived on just the bare essentials. The brothers and sisters shared what they had and the Lord was with them. Brother Shazer told the story of having only enough money for a basket of potatoes. When they emptied the basket, there was money in the bottom. They took the money to the man from whom they had bought the potatoes and he told them the money did not belong to him. It was this kind of faith that molded the spiritual mothers and fathers of the Vanderbilt Branch.

Clarence Kirkpatrick's Testimony

In 1934 I became afflicted with severe stomach trouble. We had no money, but we were not without food. I was working for the W.P.A., drawing \$21 a month. Anna became pregnant with our third child.

After seeing several different doctors, it was decided to admit me to the hospital. I was treated for several weeks. By this time, I was suffering with so much pain that it was unbearable. After many tests and x-rays they diagnosed me with cancer. After two weeks of treatment I continued to get worse. Four of the doctors came to my bedside and discussed my condition with me. They said they did not know how to treat it, but that they would like to do exploratory surgery to see if there was anything they could do. I refused to have the surgery. I told them I wanted to go home to die. I did not want to die in the hospital. I told them I would rather be home with my wife and children.

Dr. Troilo, one of my doctors, told me he would treat me at home. I was bedridden at this time. He would come to see me often, usually to give me injections of morphine for the pain, which was getting worse all the time. Finally, I could not take the pain any longer, and I knew I was dying. The doctor decided to give me a heavy dose of morphine, which would put me to sleep and allow me to die without suffering. As he left,

he told my wife the end was near and not to call him if I awoke, as there was nothing more he could do.

I did awake two days later. Sister Cora Bowman, who was a registered nurse, and her husband, Brother Dorsey Bowman, came to visit. We had known the Bowmans for approximately three years. They told me that they knew a doctor who was known to have treated and helped cancer patients. They arranged transportation for me to go see him. After examining me, he told my wife and me that he knew of no doctor or hospital that could help me. The cancer was too far advanced. The Bowmans had never mentioned the Church. At this time, I knew very little of God. They said to me, "All your doctors have failed to help you; will you try our doctor?" I asked them who their doctor was. They said that their doctor was God. I had nothing to lose. I agreed to try "their doctor."

The very next day was Sunday. The Bowmans picked us up that morning and drove us to the Church in Redstone. After the service was opened, Brother Bowman explained to those attending about my condition and my purpose for being there. At the time I weighed about 89 pounds. My normal weight before I became sick was about 176 pounds. The congregation all knelt in prayer. The elders stood around me to anoint me. An apostle of the Church, Brother Martin King, put his hands on my head. He commanded, "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth," that I be made whole. As he spoke these words, the pain ceased. I felt as if I were an entirely different person. I was made whole instantly. My strength returned and my mind was cleared. The effects of so many months of pain and taking morphine were gone. I told them that I had not eaten any solid food for three months. I had about three ounces of milk four times a day with Bismuth Powder, the last week just prior to this. That day, I had nothing on my stomach at all. When I arrived there that morning I had no strength left in my body at all. After being taken home, I got out of the car and walked into my house on my own strength, as though I had never been sick.

One of the doctors I had seen, Dr. Bell, came to see me. After I told him all that had happened, he asked permission to admit me to the hospital and have me examined. I said that I didn't want to go to the hospital. But he insisted so persistently that I consented. At that time I did not realize that it was all God's plan. They kept me in the hospital for eight days. All their tests revealed that I no longer had any cancer.

Now, Anna was very afraid of water, and she was pregnant with our first daughter who was due in two to three weeks. She was having a real battle. One morning about 5:30 am, she told me she had won the battle

with Satan. This was Sunday morning. Anna said, "We will go to Church and be baptized today." The temperature that day was about 20 degrees above zero when we arrived at the lagoon on the Monongahela River. The river was frozen solid. While they were trying to get a hole broken in the ice big enough to baptize us, a huge tugboat, pulling six huge barges of coal, came down the river. The churning of the huge paddle pushing and churning, caused such a large wake that it broke up the ice. It caused the ice to move out from the bank away from shore. Brother Clyde Gibson took us into the water and baptized us. As we left the water, the ice floated back toward shore. While we were standing on the bank of the river, Anna opened her eyes and saw a beam of light as bright as the sun, in the shape of a funnel, spread over all of us.

In the late 1930s, the old Smock Branch was dissolved and a number of the members transferred to the Vanderbilt Mission. They needed a permanent meeting place but had no money for rent. They decided to meet in a little building in back of Sister Delvia Lowther's home. The upstairs had been used for a chicken coop and the downstairs for a pig-pen. Imagine what it must have looked like and the amount of work needed to clean it up so that they could use it to worship the Lord! They had time, but no money. They had desire, but little talent. They used old lumber, salvaging all the old nails they could find, and they worked hard. They had to haul their own water, and work by the light of an oil lamp at night.

Saints gathered from branches all over the area to attend the dedication of their Church building when it was completed. Some were in suits and ties, others in their blue work shirts and overalls. Some of the sisters were in their gingham dresses and sunbonnets. Brother William H. Cadman was also in attendance.

The Vanderbilt Mission's next meeting place was on Route 51, about eight miles north of Uniontown. This was called Franklin Church, and had gas lights and gas heat. The Saints began meeting there on May 8, 1938. This was a real Church building, complete with pews. It was there that the Vanderbilt MBA was first organized by Brother Meredith Griffith. The Saints worshipped there for about a year and then moved to an old one-room schoolhouse on Virgin Run Lake Road.

An Experience by Sister Delvia Lowther

I, Delvia Lowther, met up with The Church of Jesus Christ about the month of June 1914. I was baptized into the Church on September 2nd 1914, by Elder Martin King. . . . I became a firm believer in The Book of Mormon and desired very much that some day the Lord would cause one of the three Nephites to appear among us, for we had read that they will be among the Gentiles, and shall minister unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people. (See III Nephi 28:29-30) I know of a truth that God granted me the desire of my heart. This is how it happened:

In the year of 1940, I was living in a country home along highway No. 711, near Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania. My mother, Sister Rosalie Rigger, and Brother Jacob Miller (he was a blind man) made their home with me. One day, in the afternoon, the weather being warm, my mother and our neighbor's boy (George Lloyd) were sitting on the front porch. A man made his appearance, came up to the porch, and asked for something to eat. I was working in the kitchen, and mother called, and said: "Delvia, here is a man who wants something to eat." I came to the door and, much to my surprise, I saw a man, not too tall, and not too heavy, but had hair white as snow; it was shoulder length. He looked like a man in his 70's; he wore a gray plaid breakfast shawl around his shoulders, no coat. As I looked into his eyes, they were like pools of clear water. His eyes were blue, and he had the expression of an innocent child. He said: "Daughter, could you spare me a bit of bread and water?" I said, "Yes sir," for I never turn any away from my door. I went in to prepare his tray, and I could hear him talking to mother but could not hear mother saying anything which seemed strange for she was a great Bible reader, and the first thing she did when meeting any one was to bring up the subject of religion. I took his tray out where he sat on the steps, and I soon learned why mother had not done any talking; for it was as if we were spellbound by the wonderful things we heard him say. . . . How the Angel had come back and brought the everlasting Gospel, and great promises he had made to his people. He also told us of much suffering and hardships that God's people would go through; he told us of the Second World War, which was to come to pass, and the suffering of the Jews. We could not speak, for he seemed to have such power when he spoke. I went into Brother Miller's bedroom and took him by the hand, and said, come Brother Miller, "Come, and hear a man who has told us all things." I led him to the porch, and he sat down and listened.

Every once in a while Brother Miller cried out loud, for he felt such a blessing in what he heard, tears running down the cheeks of all of us, even our neighbor's boy, George Lloyd. No one spoke but the stranger. When he finished his lunch, he arose, and came toward me, handing me his tray.

I noticed, as he arose, it was done in quick action, like a child, not like an elderly person. He then asked God to bless us all and took me by the hand, and said: "Daughter, hold fast to what you have."

He then turned and went down the steps across the lawn, and jumped like a small boy down over a stone wall about two feet high; he walked swiftly to the highway, and we saw him no more. We looked in both directions, but he was nowhere to be seen. We then talked among ourselves about what had happened, and we all knew he had surely been sent by the Lord. When Brother Richard Lowther (my husband) came from work, I told him of what had happened, and he remarked, "He must have been one of the three Nephites. I wish he would come back some time when I am at home." We praise and thank our Maker for what we have seen and heard, for we have no doubt in us concerning God's dealings with his people. These are the witnesses to the above experience: Sisters Delvia Lowther and Rosalie Riggen, Brother Jacob Miller, and our neighbor George Lloyd. (*The Gospel News*, February 1958)

In 1941, this growing congregation moved to a little building right in the town of Vanderbilt. It was owned by a funeral director and had been used as a warehouse. Once again there was much repair work that needed to be done before it could be used. It became a team effort with everyone contributing. There was no water supply, so there were no restrooms, and they had to be content with outside toilets. They began to use this building on November 22, 1941.

Vanderbilt was established as a branch on July 9, 1949, with Brother Oran Thomas elected as the first Presiding Elder. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, there were over 35 baptisms in Vanderbilt. On March 8, 1950, Brother Thomas asked to be relieved as presiding elder and asked for permission to hold meetings at Whitsett, which was granted. Brother Joseph Shazer was elected to replace him.

In the summer and fall of 1951, Brother Shazer preached the Gospel on the local radio station, WOVI in Connellsville, while the young saints

would sing. Immediately after the broadcast, they would all hurry to the Church for an MBA meeting.

Once again they outgrew their house of worship, this time buying a piece of property on Route 20 in the fall of 1952. As in the past, the saints worked hard to raise the money needed for construction and then to erect the building themselves. The new Church building was dedicated on September 21, 1958. The total cost of the building was \$14,000.

By the end of the decade of the fifties, Vanderbilt had 98 members and the Bethelboro Mission (under the Vanderbilt Branch) had 38 members. Brothers Anthony Thompson and Emerson Fuller were ordained into the priesthood in April of 1959.

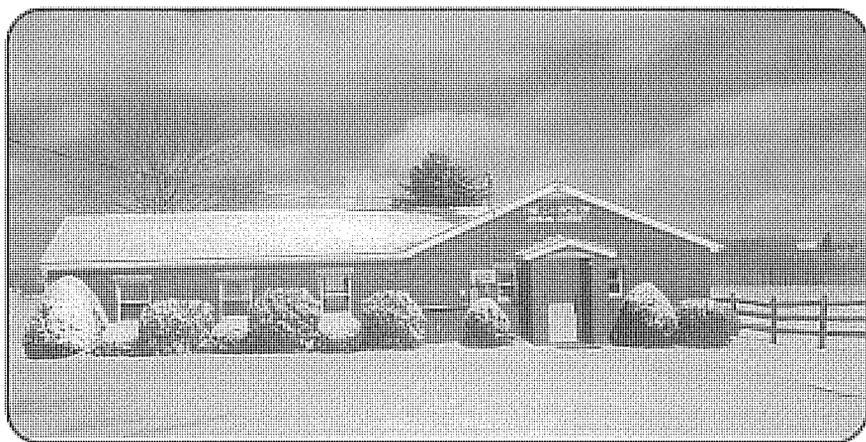
Healing of the Kings' Baby

In April 1960, Brother Charles and Sister Newanna King took their six-month old son, David, to the doctor's office. The soft spot on his head was not growing together, with a large lump forming there instead. X-rays showed that the baby had water on the brain, and Sister King was advised to take him to a specialist in Pittsburgh on the following Monday. On Sunday morning, they took him to Church to be anointed. All that were present could feel the Spirit of God in the anointing. Sister Mary Fleming, the maternal grandmother, testified that she felt this was done to draw the family closer to God. At lunchtime, the baby played normally, and in the afternoon service a big difference was apparent to everybody. At the close of the meeting, Brother Shazer asked everyone to fast and pray for the child on Monday. When the child was taken to the doctor in Pittsburgh, the first thing he said was, "There's nothing wrong with that baby." The doctor who had the x-rays taken said, "It's just one of those things we don't understand." A subsequent physical examination found him to be in perfect condition.

FREDONIA BRANCH

Meetings began to be held in the Fredonia area after the baptism of Brother Russell and Sister Ethel Cadman in 1946. The Youngstown, Ohio Branch Elders started holding house meetings for the few members living in the area. Soon many others came to the Gospel, and the desire to have their own building in which to worship was within everyone's heart. In the summer of 1956, Brother Russell Cadman donated land for the building. The 1956 General Church October Conference approved the plans for the building, and an invitation was extended for the brothers to assist with this project. Brothers Dan and Tony Picciuto, Gene Kline and others came to construct the building.

Thanks to favorable weather, the construction went quickly. During this time, four more members were added to their number. The original building was erected at a cost of \$3,306. Their first meeting was held in December 1956, just two months after construction was started and was dedicated in the summer of 1957. Both non-members and members originally from Fredonia now attend services in Ohio, California and Pennsylvania Branches.



Fredonia Church Building

IMPERIAL BRANCH

(The material below was submitted by Sister Isabel G. Hendler.)

In the spring of 1953, Brother Jacob and Sister Martha Christman were desirous of buying a home. After extensive searching, Sister Martha became discouraged and petitioned God earnestly that they might find a place where they could be happy and content.

One night in a dream she was told to, “buy the house at the cross-roads and build your home on this stump.” After looking at many houses, they finally came to one in Imperial, a town in which Sister Martha had not given serious consideration to residing; however, they decided to look at it. The first visit to the house was at night. Brother Jake noted a large garage and commented that it might be a good place to start a repair and welding shop. Being interested, they decided to look at it in the daylight. This time Sister Martha found in the backyard a large stump with the roots growing under part of the house. It must have been there for years, as the roots were large and the stump old in appearance. That night at home, she remembered her dream and felt it was God’s will that they buy this house.

After some time, an idea to hold Wednesday evening meetings in the garage was conceived. Because of the winter weather road conditions and the number of brothers and sisters in the Imperial vicinity, they decided to seek permission to meet there; and on November 17, 1954, Brother James Moore requested and was granted permission from the McKees Rocks Branch to hold services. Attendance at the Wednesday evening meetings gradually increased, and soon Sunday evening services were added.

About this time, Sister Eva Moore testified that her mind was troubled. Although she knew God was working, she could not understand His plan. During this time, they traveled to California for a couple of weeks to visit her family and the saints there.

While still in California, Sister Eva had a dream of a newborn child, although she was not aware at this time that they had already begun to

hold services in Imperial. The next day after her dream, while alone in prayer, a great blessing came upon her. She arose from her knees and went to the mailbox to find a letter from home telling of the first meeting in the garage, or "the birth of the Gospel in Imperial." This first meeting was held November 22, 1954, and a great blessing was experienced by all who attended. Sister Martha Christman worried about separating from the McKees Rocks Branch, however; but, in due time, God gave her a dream. It seemed they were living in a large home together with the Church people. Brother Martin Michalko (of the McKees Rocks Branch) was in one of the rooms doing some work for the Church. He came to the door and asked Sister Martha to help. She agreed but said she must first lock her door. As she went to lock the door, she heard a knock and found two children waiting to come in. Her first thought was that if she let the children in, she would not be able to help Brother Martin, but, loving children so much, her heart softened as she looked at them, and so she let them come in. As she started to shut the door, there was another knock; but this time it was an old man, and he, too, was let in. Sister Martha's heart was heavy, for while she wanted to admit these people, she felt a responsibility to go help Brother Martin. There was a third knock at the door and she found a large number of people wanting to come in. This time she opened the door wide and invited them to enter. Then she turned to tell Brother Martin that she could not help him, and he seemed to understand as he smiled and nodded his head. So it was revealed to her that the treasure she had expected to find under the large tree stump was the beginning of the work of God, "the Pearl of Great Price."

Brother Harry Hendler also had a dream that greatly encouraged them, in which he found himself in the McKees Rocks Branch. All of the elders were on the rostrum when suddenly he heard Brother Isaac Smith ask them, "Where is Brother Harry?" They answered that he was around somewhere, but Brother Harry was seated behind one of the pillars that seemed to be in the room. Brother Smith appeared around the column and exclaimed, "Oh, there you are." He continued, "There are twelve of you, aren't there, and you have promised to pay the electric bill." Brother

Harry answered, "Yes." Brother Smith pulled a scroll out of his coat pocket and said, "What about the other seven?" After hesitating a moment, he said, "Oh, well, we'll forget about them just now." Then he disappeared. The meaning of this dream would become more apparent in due time.

Permission for Imperial to become an established mission was granted at the October 1955 Conference. On October 11, 1955, the organization meeting took place at McKees Rocks. Later on that month they had three baptisms, which completed the seven baptisms that God had revealed in Brother Harry's dream.

3

History
of the
Ohio District

CHAPTER THREE

Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit, which natural fruit is good and the most precious above all other fruit. Jacob 5:61

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

In 1919, Brothers Peter Garofalo and Joe Corrado, from the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch, were directed by revelation to preach the Restored Gospel in Youngstown. At first, they came to East Youngstown (now known as Campbell), where some of their relatives lived. But when these relatives were not receptive the brothers moved on to the west side of Youngstown and preached the Gospel at various homes. That same day, as they were walking on Elberen Street, discouraged by the lack of interest, the Lord had already prepared a place for them to preach the Gospel. Anna Damore saw them outside and asked them whether they were making a collection for a needy family. Their answer was that they were preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When she invited them into her home, they felt that the revelation of going to Youngstown that had been given to them was fulfilled. As they preached the Gospel that evening, they explained about the blessings and gifts that are in the Church. Carl and Arcangelo Damore joined in, listening to these words. Anna was so touched by the Word of God that she believed and had her son, who was ill, anointed that very evening.

Brothers Joe and Pete returned home, and sometime later, Brother Carl and Sister Anna Damore were baptized in Glassport. Others who embraced the Gospel that same year were: Brother Rocco Berardino and his wife, Brother Antonio Bucci and his wife, Brother Arcangelo Damore, Sister Minnie DePiero, and Brother Thomas Marchando and his wife.

In 1920, Brother Joe Corrado was appointed by the Church to be in charge of the Youngstown Mission. At the July Conference of 1921, Youngstown was organized as a branch, with Brother Caesar Talamonti as the first presiding elder. (Bucci History, pp. 10-11)

The following are some of the experiences reported in the early days of the Youngstown Branch:

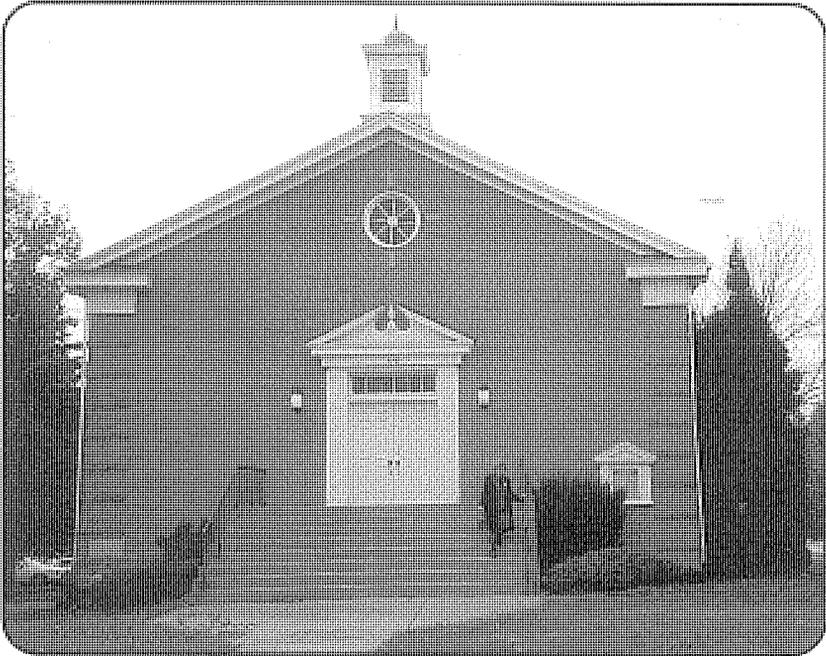
On October 19, 1919, Brother Pete Garofalo (this was the first baptism he performed) took Sister Mariantonia DiGennaro to the river to be baptized. Slime on the bottom of the river from a nearby steel mill caused Brother Pete to lose his footing, and they both went under. Her husband, Frank DiGennaro, was at the bank of the river. Some non-member asked him to go after her and he said, "If this is the Church you people say it is, she'll come back to the shore. If she doesn't come back, you people better watch out." When she saw that Brother Pete hadn't come up after she did, she went after him. She took him by the hand and helped him out. On December 21, 1919, Brother Frank DiGennaro was baptized along with Sister Angeline Damore (who later married Brother A. A. Corrado).

Youngstown is the First Branch of The Ohio District

The Youngstown Branch had been instrumental in preaching the Gospel in surrounding areas, establishing missions in various places, such as in Cleveland in 1920, and in Girard in 1945. (Bucci History, p. 13)

Initially, meetings were held in homes and later in a rented church building at Rayen and Walnut Street until 1929. Many were baptized and the Church began to grow.

On August 19, 1929, the Youngstown Church was incorporated in Ohio, and later that same year, they purchased a church building at 328 South Forest Avenue. Years later, in 1956, a spacious Church building was erected at 2750 Gibson Street.



Youngstown Church Building on Gibson Street

Brother Timothy Dominic Bucci's Testimony

I came to know the Restored Gospel, The Church of Jesus Christ, when I was a boy of about 10 years of age. My parents, who were Roman Catholic, were converted in December 1919. . . . I saw the change that came about. Our home became a home of prayer. Idol worship was abandoned. . . . House meetings were being held until a church was rented. I became a prayerful boy and had faith in the Lord. The house meetings left a deep and profound impression upon me.

As I grew older, I began to drift away from Church and became entangled in worldly things. In the meantime, I had gotten married on November 28, 1928. When I was about 29 years of age, I began to think seriously about my soul's salvation and my family. At the time I had one daughter (Phyllis Bucci Kovacic). Memories of when I was a boy and how I was blessed came to my mind, and I began to read the Bible and The Book of Mormon. I wanted to know for myself if the Church my parents were converted to was the right one, so I began to attend Church. I had not attended for about 12 years. One Sunday

morning, hearing the Word of God preached, and the need of having faith, repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost having grown within me, I felt the power of God and the spirit of repentance and requested my baptism. This was [on] October 9, 1938 in Youngstown, Ohio—A day I have never regretted.

I became attentive and active in Church work, reading constantly The Book of Mormon and Bible, both of which became very precious to me. I was ordained three years later to the office of teacher and two years later to the office of elder (January 1943). I felt a great responsibility and duty to preach the Gospel.

Sister Anna Nastasia's Testimony

I had no enemies in my "mother religion," the church I belonged to before I joined The Church of Jesus Christ. I was loved and respected by all. There was no man or woman that caused me to change; I sought not for gold or silver, neither did I join The Church of Jesus Christ through being told that this was the [True] Church. It was not pride [or] love of earthly things that caused me to repent and be baptized for the remission of my sins. No, I had no earthly reason to join this Church.

When I entered The Church of Jesus Christ in Youngstown, Ohio on Nov. 5, 1922, to me it seemed that I [had] entered Paradise.

I heard angels sing and my heart was quickly illuminated by the glory of God so that my tongue cannot express [what] my heart felt within me that day. My heart had been sad and I [had] carried a heavy burden. I never had a smile on my face. But the instant I entered this Church I felt a load taken from me. I was illuminated within the depths of my heart and soul, so much that my grief was turned into joy.

I fell greatly in love with this Church and that love is just as fresh today as it was then. I also met with the enemy of my soul that day . . . my mother did not want me to be baptized. . . . I offered my soul to God and even though I have battle after battle with the Prince of this world, yet until this day I have survived all things that have troubled me, because I joined this Church. I have had trouble [to the point] that even death would have been far sweeter than the obstacles that have come before me, but nothing can make my heart sad in any way.

It has been revealed unto me that this is the Church that leads into eternal life, because God has inspired His Spirit within me and causes me not to yield to temptation or to care for earthly things.

CLEVELAND, OHIO

The first members of the Church in Cleveland were Venanzio DiTomaso, his wife, Agatha, and Andrew Nemeth. Brother DiTomaso came to this country from Italy, later sending for his wife in 1913. They moved to Cleveland from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1915.

Brother DiTomaso's first contact with the Church occurred when he attended the funeral of the daughter of Brother Frank DiGennaro (his first cousin) in Niles, Ohio. Sister Concetta Dintino of Glassport, Pennsylvania, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ, was also at the funeral.

The following day, Brother DiTomaso became acquainted with Brother Joseph Corrado, who later became a leading Church missionary. Some time later, Brother DiTomaso received a letter from Brother Corrado inviting him to attend a church conference in Youngstown, Ohio, which he did not do. Brothers Corrado and Anthony DiBattista of Glassport, Pennsylvania, then paid him a visit and invited him to attend a Sunday service in Youngstown, which he accepted. His testimony was that he experienced great joy, something he never witnessed before. Brother Frank Genaro gave him a New Testament and he began to read it at every opportunity. Brother DiTomaso's wife questioned him about these people and the Church. He responded that he was convinced and believed in the Restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brothers Joseph Corrado and Vincent Genaro went to Cleveland in an attempt to convert Sister DiTomaso; however, she was not convinced until she received an experience. Her daughter, Lena, of school age, had an infection in her eye. The elders anointed her and she was healed. Both Brother and Sister DiTomaso were baptized the following Sunday in Lake Erie. This was the beginning of the first Cleveland Mission.

The mission began to expand as converts came into the fold. The Andrew Nemeth family, the Emilio DeGeronimo family, and Angeline DiTomaso were all baptized in 1921. (Bucci History, pp. 15-16)

Other early pillars of the Cleveland Branch who were baptized in 1922 included the following: Brothers Rocco Biscotti (later ordained an Apostle in 1939), Louis Biscotti and James Velardi. Brother Rocco served

as presiding elder of the Cleveland Branch for many years. Brother Albert Ventura was baptized in 1926 through the testimony of his brother-in-law, Brother Emilio DeGeronimo. His wife, Carmella Ventura, was baptized two years later. Brother Albert was instrumental in bringing many to the Lord.

Others included the Perlionis, (Brother August ordained an elder); the Milanos, (Brother Mario ordained an elder); the Picciutos, (two of the sons are Anthony and Daniel, now evangelists), the Lloyds; and the Gibsons, (Brother Vince ordained an evangelist).

The Dedication of the Cleveland Branch

The Cleveland Branch dedicated their new Church building, located at East 200th Street & Nicholas Avenue in Euclid, Ohio in 1948 with about 300 in attendance. Visitors attended from Monongahela and Erie, Pennsylvania; Lorain, Youngstown and Warren, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; and Windsor, Ontario, Canada. President William H. Cadman was the main speaker and used the sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah as his text.

The Cleveland West Side Mission was organized and became an established mission on November 16, 1957, primarily due to the distance that had to be traveled.

Meetings were held for five years in a little hall on Andrews Avenue in Lakewood until November 1962. (Bucci History, p. 32)

LORAIN, OHIO

(The Lorain History was written by Nephi DeMercurio, Jr. and Jennifer Calabrese (DeMercurio) with special thanks to Vera Naro, Betty Alessio, Katherine Cocco, Rose Palacios, Melvin Saylor and Jesus Massa.)

In 1922 Brother Leonard and Sister Carmella Alessio of the Dunlevy, Pennsylvania Mission visited friends in Lorain, Ohio. They desired to move to Lorain, but many discouraged the move. Sister Carmella was given the following dream.

I dreamed that I had clothes hanging on the line and while I was standing by looking at them, I saw a flock of doves fly from the sky and perch upon each clothespin. They picked up the clothes off the line and flew towards the west. I then saw a picture of Christ with a cane in His hand looking at the doves also.

Brother and Sister Alessio eventually realized the meaning of the dream and were assured their move to Lorain was part of God's plan. In Lorain, the Alessios visited with their friends, Tony and Theresa Calabrese, Patsy and Rose Fyre, and Carmella Argento, and told them of The Church of Jesus Christ. These families showed interest and requested Bibles and more information. Soon, services were being held in the home of Anthony Calabrese to discuss the faith and doctrine.

In October 1922 Tony Calabrese accompanied Brother Alessio to the Youngstown Conference. Here Tony asked for his baptism and thus became the first member baptized in Lorain. The following month Theresa Calabrese and Patsy Fyre were baptized. In December, Rose Fyre, John Fyre, Carmella Argento, Jeanette Tucci, and Alice Aquilla were baptized. These were the charter members in the city of Lorain. Elder Frank Nastasi had been sent to supervise and assist with the new work in Lorain. Brothers Joe Corrado and Eugene Perri followed with assistance. Brother Joe Corrado taught them how to sing the songs in the hymnal, which had no musical notes. As the group enlarged, meetings moved to the Alessios' home.

In 1923 a few more people were added to the roll. These included the Charles Blank family, the Joe Altomare family, the Ralph Calabrese family, and John Concetta. Meeting in homes was obviously becoming difficult. Hence, the first meeting place was found on the corner of Elyria Avenue and 22nd Street. The Sam Presutto family had also moved from Dunlevy, Pennsylvania and lived just behind the building. This young group became an established mission in October 1925, with Brother Sam Ambrose as presiding elder. Brother Leonard Alessio was the first ordained teacher and soon after was ordained an elder. Brother Tony Calabrese was the first deacon and later on Brother Ralph Calabrese was ordained as

well. Sister Carmella Alessio was the first ordained deaconess and was assisted by Sister Mary Presutto who had been ordained in the Dunlevy, Pennsylvania Mission.

The names of families that followed include the Palellas, Smiths, Naples, Scalisas, Gregorys, Aquilinos, Carillos, Dores, Velardis, Thomases, Ciccatis, and John Romano, who transferred from Detroit, Michigan. The meeting place was changed to a building at 122 West 22nd Street and remained there for 17 years. An MBA local was organized in the fall of 1927. A Ladies' Circle group was organized in 1929. Both were essential in the development of the Church in Lorain.

There were many early experiences in Lorain. At Sister Theresa Calabrese's baptism, Brother Nastasi asked Patsy Fyre what he thought of the Church to which his reply was "Someday." Brother Nastasi replied, "Who has time? Don't wait for time!" The words caused him to ponder and his decision was made right there to be baptized.

Brother Tony Calabrese became very ill with stomach pains and was convinced of his impending death. He refused medical treatment. He had a vision where he saw a white sheet with the number 80 on it. As his condition improved, the Lord revealed to him that this would be the length of his life and his wife would live 10 years longer. Sure enough, both came to pass.

Alfred Dominico became ill one day while working at the factory when he was only 16 years old. He was taken to the hospital and found to have a perforated ulcer, and an operation was performed. He developed peritonitis, a deadly infection at that time (Remember, this was before the proliferation of antibiotics). Brothers, sisters, and the Church went into prayer on his behalf and anointed a handkerchief for him. In a prayer service the Lord showed Sister Carrie Altomare (Alfred Dominico's sister) a vision in which Alfred was lifted from a coffin. She followed in the gift of tongues and the interpretation by Brother Vincent Aquilino was, "He is in my hands." This brought relief, and he fully recovered. During a check-up, the physician remarked, "There is a mystery in you that I don't know and understand. I thought for sure that you would have a job playing a harp with the angels."

After all this, Alfred Dominico had still not yet asked for his baptism. He developed some further health problems and was referred to a specialist. Instead of going to the physician he went home and began to ponder over his condition. He was “waiting for a calling” at this time, yet began to realize how much the Lord had already done for him. He fell on his knees and prayed for the spirit of repentance and received it immediately. He finally asked for his baptism on Sunday, November 20, 1932.

Treasured Memories of Two Pillars of the Faith

Brother Joseph and Sister Susie Maselli

Sister Katherine Cocco shares a few pages from the Maselli family scrapbook. Her parents, Brother Joseph and Sister Susie, left behind them a rich legacy of faith that has touched many other lives. Like most of their *paisanos*, they were raised in the Catholic faith. Sister Katherine writes:

My dad was introduced to the Gospel in 1936. Six months later he requested his baptism. Mom accepted the Gospel after she had tormented my Dad by being very angry with him, refusing to cook or be nice. Slowly she began to admit to herself the change in him and was prompted to read the Bible that she brought over from Italy. She began to pray that God would reveal Himself to her and let her know the way she should go. She would wait until my dad and all the children were asleep and by the light of the kerosene lamp she would read for hours. In those days there was no electricity in their house, much less would we have been able to afford it. It was during the Great Depression. Pa kept asking her to attend Church with him and finally she accepted. She felt the love of the saints, and the Spirit of God.

After a month or so of attending she, too, called for her baptism. At the time of her calling she had been wearing a brace and needed crutches to walk. She had become paralyzed in her left leg after the birth of her fourth child; the first six of their seven children were born at home. She had been going to the Elyria Memorial hospital for about two and one-half years for physical therapy to help her walk. After the elder took her into the waters of regeneration, she walked back out, took off her braces and threw away the crutches and never used them again. Praise God for her complete healing.

Concourses of Angels

Pa, at the time of his calling actually crawled down the aisle at the old storeroom where they held meetings and said, "If you think I am worthy, I want to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ." Pa was working for the WPA (Work Projects Administration) doing street cleaning and roadside maintenance. He was able to receive food in return for his labors to feed the family. One afternoon, he found some mushrooms at the side of a ditch and decided to bring them home for lunch. Mom knew they were not good but Pa insisted they were, and she should cook them for his lunch. She did so, much to her consternation. He ate them and went back to work. Of course he became violently sick. The men working around him had to carry him home. An elder of the Church was called to anoint him. Pa pleaded with our Lord to let him live because he had six children at that time that he needed to take care of and help raise. He went into a deep sleep and saw concourses of heavenly angels all around his bed. When he awoke, all of the poisonous mushrooms he had eaten were given up by his body. He was made well and was able to go back to work the next day. Praise God for His mercy and love.

In the year 1953, Pa had been working for the Lake Terminal Railroad as a car inspector. One afternoon the engineer backed up to couple some cars and was unaware that Pa was in between two of them. Pa was crushed in six inches of space. He was a short robust man. The brakeman and several others knew that he was there. Running to his aid, they felt he was dead. My dad could hear them talking and heard them say, "No use to rush for the ambulance, he is dead." My father's last words before he lost consciousness were, "Oh God, help me." We received an urgent call from the hospital to come. We called for the elder to anoint him for a healing. He had to undergo surgery, as three or four ribs were broken. After a ten-day stay in the hospital and weeks of recovery at home, he went back to work. Praise God; once again he heard their cry for help.

Mom lived to the age of 91 and Pa to the age of 97. Both were given experiences of their death. Mom was unable to talk because of severe dementia for eight months. She was also bedridden. Only occasionally she was able to utter some words that were understandable. One afternoon, while I was feeding her, she sat upright in bed and proclaimed, "I see Jesus coming. I am at the top of the mountain and I see Jesus coming for me." A few days later she was called home very peace-

fully. Pa, one morning, while trying to eat a little breakfast, told me in 14 days he would be called home. On the evening of the 14th day from his proclamation he, too, died peacefully. There was a beautiful glow around him and a big smile was evident on his face, and I knew he had seen something more beautiful than anything in this life. I feel he saw the Savior and all the loved ones who had gone on before. How beautiful and precious is the death of a saint!

In January 1945 the Lorain Branch was officially organized. Apostle Vernon Chester, Evangelists Joseph Altomare and Ermigildo Ciccati, and Elders Patsy Fyre, Alfred Dominico, and James Velardi were in attendance.

In November 1950, Sister Vicki Calabrese had a terrible accident. It was on Sunday, and Church had been canceled, because of a heavy snowfall. The house was heated by natural gas and, at times, when the pressure was too low, the furnace would go out. On that Sunday it did, and Sister Vicki had decided to try to light it. Unbeknownst to her, the gas chamber had filled with gas. As Sister Vicki went to light it with a match, it ignited and exploded. Her clothes caught on fire, and, by the Grace of God, a friend staying in their home at the time happened to come in and quickly covered her with a shirt, putting out the fire. However, she had already sustained severe second and third degree burns. Brother Jim Velardi, who lived close by, was called to anoint her; and, after prayer was offered, she was driven to the hospital. She looked so bad; they wondered what kind of scars she would have to live with. Miraculously, by the mercies of God, her burns were healed totally and completely, with no scars whatsoever. (*The Gospel News*, March 1951)

Many of the founding brothers and sisters of Lorain have moved to other parts of the vineyard or passed on to their rewards. However, their testimonies, experiences, and words of encouragement set wonderful examples. They certainly echo in the hearts and minds of the brothers and sisters who continue to fellowship in Lorain, Ohio today.

A New Church Home

The Lorain Branch was built entirely by members and their families and friends. A building fund had been started in 1937, with each family initially giving one dollar per month, and later in 1941, three dollars per month. Families donated extra if they could afford it. Contributions were made from local businesses and branches and missions throughout the Church. Some members gave “until it hurt.” These people did not have much in the way of cash but were rich in the Spirit of God and charity. Sister Rosemary DeFoggie, at this time confined to her home with severe arthritis, was an integral part of the collection and organization of funds. As you can see, much sacrifice was made to assist in the building of the Lorain Branch.

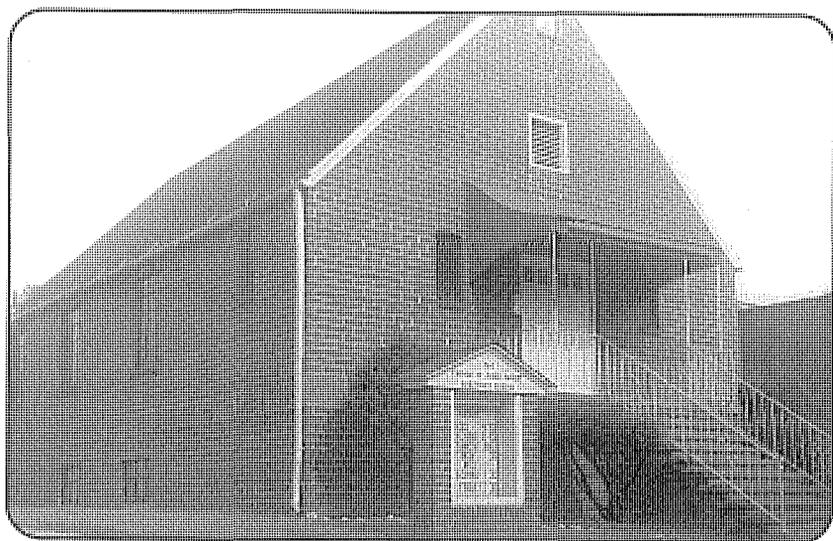
The lot was originally owned by Brother Anthony Calabrese. He had purchased it in 1919, and sold it to his son, Brother Joseph Calabrese. Brother Joe then donated it for this purpose (along with a purchase of an additional 25 feet of street frontage from Mr. Rusine after a trade was made by Brother Jim Velardi with a larger lot he owned elsewhere in Lorain.) The lot was now 50 feet by 150 feet. Brother Frank Giovannone leaned much on the Lord when he volunteered to take on the responsibility of his first complete Church building. His rough sketches were worked into blue prints and coordinated with the city inspector. When they had the initial ground breaking, they held a small prayer service on the lot. As dusk descended there was a manifestation of God’s pleasure in their efforts. God’s Spirit fell upon Brother Frank Altomare as he spoke, when they were lifting the first shovel of dirt.

Brothers Ralph and Tony Calabrese helped Brother Frank Giovannone during the day. Others contributed time, as they were able, even scheduling their vacations during the fall of 1947 and spring of 1948 to be able to devote more hours to this project. Even those who were in poor health contributed in some way. For example, Sister Mary Aquilino boarded Brother Frank Giovannone in her home for the entire duration of the project. In the Aquilino home, sometimes late at night they could hear Brother Frank praying fervently for God’s guidance, direction, and

strength to cope with the problems which arose. Brother Frank's wife, Ina, who was not a member of the Church at that time, was exceedingly patient and understanding to assume all the responsibilities for her family while her husband was away. Brothers Emil Carlini, John Romano, and Joe Straccia, who plastered the building, also made a significant contribution. Also, George Defazio helped to install the electrical wiring and assisted with the wood finishing.

The Lorain Branch Building at 2655 Broadway Avenue was dedicated on June 6, 1948. The dedication was held on a beautiful Sabbath day and Brother Charles Ashton, First Counselor of the General Church, gave the dedicatory sermon. He spoke on the 66th chapter of Isaiah, verses one and two. The Spirit of the Lord prompted two people to be baptized: Lucy Calabrese and Mary Sorino.

In 1954 Brother Joe Calabrese was transferred to Tiffin, Ohio for his employment. Sister Anna Frammolino of Detroit, Michigan had a son in Lima, Ohio and asked Brother Joe to visit him. With the help of Brothers Dominic Thomas and John Romano from Detroit, a work in this part of the vineyard was started. Brother Carl and Sister Joanne Frammolino were baptized and others followed.



Lorain Church Building on Broadway Avenue

Three pillars of the Lorain Branch were ordained elders on the same day in 1955. These were Brothers Frank and Joseph Calabrese, who later went on to become Apostles, and Brother Frank Altomare.

In 1968 Brother Joseph Calabrese was led by God to start a Spanish mission in South Lorain. This was the beginning of many Spanish-speaking people coming to the Lord. In several years the work was transferred into the Lorain Branch.

The founding years of the Lorain Branch were replete with many joys and sorrows. From this small history, a picture can be imagined of the early members and their tremendous sacrifices to build a foundation that affected many souls in the years that followed. From our American heritage, we quote Daniel Webster, the great statesman and orator. From his essay *Worthy Work*:

If we work upon marble, it will perish. If we build temples, they will crumble into dust. But if we work on immortal souls, if we imbue them with just principles of action the fear of wrong, the love of right, we engrave upon those tablets something which no time can obliterate and which will brighten and heighten through all eternity.

WARREN, OHIO

The Warren, Ohio Mission started with the saints from Niles and Warren meeting together in 1923.

The following account of the origin of the Warren work is taken from an article written by Brother Dominic Giovannone for *The Gospel News*, February 1948, p. 3:

The October Conference of 1924 was held at Cleveland, Ohio. Brother Philip Mileco of West Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, while on his journey home on the following Monday, stopped at Warren. He had been acquainted with a young couple in Pennsylvania who had moved to Champion Heights, near Warren. Their names were Nick and Rose D'Orazio, but Brother Mileco only knew the man by his first name. He searched for them on Monday but could not locate them. In the evening, he stopped at our home in Niles, Ohio. We gathered in a few brothers

and sisters and had a wonderful meeting with the blessings of God in our midst. After the service, Brother Mileco told me the reason for stopping our way was that he wanted to find the young couple. He knew they would be interested in the Church. Since he failed to find them, he asked me if I would try and locate them. I answered in saying I would try very hard to do so. Brother William Genaro had a short time before been baptized and he had a car. I asked if he would help me find these people and if I could use his car for I did not have one. He answered saying that he was only too glad to do work of that kind.

We began the following Saturday morning to search. I made it a matter of prayer, asking God to lead us or help us to find them because they were unknown to me. After traveling a few miles, I had a feeling to inquire from someone. While going along, we saw an aged man. We stopped and inquired of him whether he knew anyone in that neighborhood whose first name was Nick. He asked for the last name but I didn't know it. He said it would be hard to find anyone without knowing their last name. I inquired of him if he knew of anyone who had moved from Pennsylvania in the last couple of years. At first he said, "No." But he then hesitated and after some thought, he told us to turn off the crossroads to the left and go about a half-mile and to inquire there. To our surprise, we pulled right into Nick's driveway. We knocked at the door of the house and a young lady appeared at the door. We asked her if she knew anyone by the name of Nick. She replied saying her husband's name was Nick. I then asked her if she knew Philip Mileco from Pennsylvania. She said, "No," but that her neighbors came from there. She called Mrs. D'Orazio and told her of us looking for her husband. Neither of the men were at home from their work. We talked to both of the women for half an hour or more. This other couple's names were Nick and Josephine Iorio. While talking, Mrs. Iorio's father joined in with us, but soon disappeared. He went out into the garden to get a pole to give us a beating. As he was about to get the pole, he became paralyzed and could not move until we left. We told the ladies that we would be back that evening to talk with the men.

That evening, Mr. D'Orazio was at home and the other couple also joined us. The results were that both families came to our meeting the next Sunday and Mr. D'Orazio asked to be baptized on the following Sunday. The following Saturday, I quit my work early because of a feeling I had to go and see these people. I went home and got ready. My wife advised me not to go, but it did not stop me from going. I went on the streetcar to Warren and walked the rest of the way. I ran part of the way to the crossroads where I had to turn. When I turned, the devil

tried to turn me back. I kept going and all the words my wife had told me were coming back to me. I turned around two or three times to go back home. As I would turn, the Spirit would say, 'Keep on with your journey.' Finally I braced myself and arrived at their home. After a while, I asked Nick if he had the same desire of going to Church tomorrow. He said, "No," because he had a special job to finish at his home, being that he worked six days a week. I told him to come to Church and I would take a day off and do the job for him. He said, 'If I had to take a day of work off, then he would take a day of work off himself.' He then told me a dream. He said he saw one man dying and I came along and through this, this man resurrected. I asked him if he understood the dream, and he said, "No." I reminded him of what he had told me the previous week of wanting to be baptized. I said, "Now you changed your mind." I told him of the Spirit working on me, causing me to quit work early. I said, "The Lord has sent me here to help you. The dying man represents you." He then began to cry and told me that, as long as I was in his home, he would have a good spirit; and when I would leave, the devil would come in. He said he was then a different man altogether. I told him I would stay all night and keep the devil away. The next morning both of these families went with me to Church. In the morning, the blessings of God were in our service, and Nick [D'Orazio] got up and asked to be baptized. Josephine Iorio, Rose D'Orazio (now Rose Dreer), Nick Iorio, Jenny and Naz Ciarrochi and many others followed.

Two Experiences of Dominic Giovannone

First Experience:

Brother Dominic Giovannone had a bull in the pasture with blinders on. He went down to the pasture to cut down the thistles. Somehow, the blinders got slanted and the bull saw Brother Dominic and caught him with the horns and tossed him up and down a couple of times and tried to pin him to the ground. A voice spoke to Brother Dominic and told him to wait until the bull lifted his head, then roll toward the fence. Brother Dominic listened to the voice and after finally getting on the other side of the fence, started home.

His daughter, Betty, saw her father coming and he told her to go and call the boys. They rushed him to the hospital. While the doctors were

stitching him up, he was preaching to the doctors. They remarked that they had never had such a patient injured so badly and preaching to them. Brother Dominic said that he thanked God for the voice that saved his life.

Second Experience:

Brother Dominic was in Italy preaching the Word to the people. He would meet every night at the same place. One day he received a letter from his wife, Sister Marietta. She did not ask him to return home, but he felt she needed him. He made preparations to leave Italy that very day.

When he got home, he received a letter from his nephew stating that it was good that he left Italy when he did because someone went to the meeting spot with a gun prepared to kill Brother Dominic.

Meetings were held in Niles from 1923 to 1936. Because some of the members lived in Champion Heights and some in Warren, a decision was made in 1933 by the members to try and get a place in the Warren area, which would be centrally located for all the members. (Bucci History, p. 26)

(The following material was provided by Brother Frank Giovannone.)

In the July Conference of 1933, a resolution was passed authorizing the establishment of a Mission in Warren, Ohio, under the jurisdiction of the Youngstown Branch, with Brother Peter Molinatto in charge.

The last meeting in Niles was held in the Knights of Pythias Hall in 1933. Thus, from 1933 to 1947, the Niles members met in the Warren Mission. The meetings in Warren were held in various places, wherever a hall could be rented. There were many wonderful blessings and experiences given to the saints in Warren.

The April Conference of 1936 was held in Warren, Ohio. This was the first conference that the Church had held in Warren.

Warren was a large branch in the late 1930s through early 1940s, being that Warren and Niles met together.

In 1938, the M.B.A. was organized in Warren, with 78 members present. There was a large group of young people in Warren at this time.

At the July Conference of 1940, Warren asked permission to either buy or erect a new building. Permission was granted but nothing was done at that time.

Harvest Time among the Next Generation amidst War Clouds

(This narrative was provided by Sister Barbara Genaro Nuzzi.)

Between the years of 1920 and 1930, many Italian families were converted into the Church. Many of them settled in the greater Trumbull County, Ohio area. Their meeting place at the time was various rented buildings in Niles. During the 1930s, the congregation grew to about twenty couples. The Spirit of God burned like a fire among them. On Sundays, they would meet for two meetings, bringing their lunches and staying until 4 o'clock, and then home for dinner only to hurry back out to visit with the saints. Many times they all ended up at the same place. The blessings and love shared were needed during these hard times. All the families were poor and struggling, helping one another as much as possible. By 1935, the offspring of these families numbered well into the fifties.

The Great Depression that covered the land then was so bad that President Roosevelt initiated a program, called the W.P.A., which brought to the congregation an opportunity to have a music teacher. Mr. Bednar joined them and organized this group of young people into a choir. Brother Chester Dreer was also there and he organized Christmas programs and various other classes for the benefit of the youth. They spent any time that was not used for school or home chores together. For recreation they spent many hours at Brother Peter Molinato's farm, singing, picnicking, roasting wieners and horseback riding. These were their simple, but happy pleasures.

By 1940, the war was raging in Europe and many of the group had begun thinking of the welfare of their souls. Hearing of this large group

of young people brought many visiting elders to the Branch. On August 17, 1941, Brother Gorie Ciaravino and Brother John Dulisse were in their midst. The Spirit of God was present also, and during preaching, the spirit of repentance came among them and nine souls answered the call. They were Joseph Genaro, Rose Corrado, Armand Genaro, Frank Giovannone, Mary Genaro Krasnasky, Jean D'Orazio Genaro, Jonathan Molinato, Carmel Mollica Genaro, and Charles Blank. The joy was immeasurable! The candidates were taken to their usual baptismal place, which was the farm of Brother Dominic Giovannone. Many souls were brought to the newness of life with Christ in those waters.

The entrance of the United States into the war in December of that year soon overshadowed the joy of this day. Of the five brothers baptized that day, four of them were drafted. On January 26, 1942, Brothers Armand and Joe Genaro were drafted and left the safety of their new brothers and sisters to go to Camp Perry, Ohio, an induction center for the Army. From there, they went for basic training at Fort McClelland, Alabama. After their training, the Army began to deploy the men to different bases. Brother Joe received his orders first, sending him to Fort Benning, Georgia; the brothers were going to be separated for the first time.

There they stood at the train station waiting for Brother Joe to be called to board, then Brother Armand heard his name being called. He was told to, "Pack up your gear, you're going to Fort Benning." "Thank you, Lord, for a little more time." They worked together as instructors in the academy battalion, happy to be together. The time soon came for another deployment and Brother Joe was transferred to Camp Blanning, Florida and Brother Armand to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. On one of his "leaves home," Brother Armand and Sister Jean Dreer were united in holy matrimony, August 1, 1943. One day after returning, he sat cleaning his rifle and looked up and saw his brother coming towards him. He casually called, "Hi, Joe," not realizing they had been separated. Suddenly, the reality of it caught up to him and they joyfully embraced one another. They stayed together through several camps and the voyage overseas to England and then on to Omaha Beach, France. They contin-

ued together until they reached the front lines. Once there, they were separated again, not knowing the outcome of the other.

While fighting near Aachen, Germany, Cpl. Armand Genaro was pinned down by enemy fire and his entire squad was killed, leaving him alone. He lay still on the ground for 32 hours. It was January, and he soon became stiff and frozen, surrounded by the enemy. As the German soldiers went around, they stripped the dead bodies of all their valuables. When they tried to roll him over, they quickly knew he was alive. The soldier then put his rifle to the head of our brother, but the prayers of the saints were with him, and God spared his life at that very moment. The medics were called, and he was taken prisoner of war on October 1, 1944. He was taken to Lindenberg, Germany, on the Rhine River, where he was loaded into a railroad boxcar to be shipped to Firstenberg on the Oder River. They were locked in and taken on a journey across Germany, which lasted four days. In the boxcars, they were jammed in shoulder-to-shoulder, no food, no facilities, and no room to even sit. Men died and their bodies could not fall to the floor! During the trip, American and British fighter planes continually strafed the train; they not knowing their fellow soldiers were inside. Shortly after they arrived in Firstenberg, the Russian troops were bearing down on the city, so the Germans had to move their prisoners. They marched them for ten days, the first and second day non-stop. They received no food until the fourth day. It was a cup of barley soup (with worms). It was winter and very cold and snowy. They received no other food until they reached their destination, which was Buchenwald. Once there, they were put into tents with straw on the ground, no bedding, no warmth, no water, and no relief. Brother Armand wore the same clothes for eight months; he was deloused once, but was not given an opportunity to bathe during the entire time.

Back home, the Branch had continual prayer for their soldiers overseas. The MBA sent packages to them of things they thought they might need or want. The first wave of bad news came in June 1944. Brother Charles Blank had been killed at the invasion of Normandy Beach in France.

The hard reality of the war was upon them. It was a terrible shock for the Branch; they prayed fervently for the safety of the others. They continued on until they received a telegram in November 1944 from the War Department, saying that Armand was missing in action since October 14, 1944. At that time, the Red Cross sent a representative to the home of Brother Pete and Sister Josephine to comfort them. During this meeting, the representative explained the seriousness of this information. She (the representative) became puzzled as they talked and asked their daughter Mary, "Do they understand what I am saying to them?" Mary answered, "Yes, they understand you." The representative did not understand their calmness. Then Brother Pete told her, "We serve the Living God and He can take care of him." The woman then knew that she did not have to spend the usual couple of hours comforting this family, and she said, "I can see I'm not needed here." The brothers and sisters began to have prayer meetings every night at the Genaro home. This was no easy thing, for many of them worked in factories and mills twelve or more hours a day to supply the war effort. During one meeting, Sister Josephine said in a testimony, that if God would bring her son home, she would kiss the ground. At this time of not knowing, God gave her a dream where she saw Armand and he was on a farm (at one time he was), and he looked so thin. She asked him, "How are you?" he told her, "Okay, Mom, but I am so hungry." She told him, "I want to get you something to eat," but the dream ended. When their son, Frank came to breakfast that morning, he told his mother he dreamed of Armand and that he was alive. She quickly told him she had a dream, too. Praise God, He never leaves us alone.

There was no news month after month, letters were written and sent but never made their destination. Finally on March 5, 1945, they got another telegram telling them that Armand was a prisoner of war. Their prayers continued and they began to receive censored letters from him. It is worthy to note that as I interviewed for this article, I was told that neither his wife, nor his parents complained or lamented in the meetings. They kept a constant faith and trust in God. The night they received this

news, Brother Bob Ciarrochi said they all went to the Genaro home and he remembers Brother Pete walking over to the radio and turning it off and saying, "We will not turn it on again until my boys are home."

In June, they received a telegram saying that Armand was liberated from Germany by the Russian troops in April of 1945. Sister Jean worked at a large plant with several other Sisters, including Armand's natural sister, Mary. Both departments that they worked in knew of their condition. Sister Jean said that every time she would walk through the mill to visit Mary everyone would look at her to see if they could tell whether there was any news. Finally, the day came when her mother, Sister Rose Dreer, called and told her of the telegram of his liberation, she went running to tell Mary the good news. As her co-workers saw her happily running, they all began to cry knowing good news had finally come. That night, the two families gathered together and gave prayers of thanksgiving to their Living God.

Brother Armand said that during his imprisonment he prayed constantly to the Lord ("Every minute") never knowing if his life would be taken. It was Hitler's desire that no prisoners of war would survive, though it was God's Will that he would survive.

A daily ration was a cup of tea in the morning, which they sometimes used to shave with. At lunch, they got one slice of black potato bread and at evening, a cup of rutabaga soup, complete with those ever-present worms, possibly the best protein they were getting. At his induction he weighed 170 lbs. and at liberation, he weighed only 90 lbs. Only through the grace of God did he survive the daily starvation, sickness, despair, and mental anguish. He spent his days walking the circumference of the compound praying as he watched the continuous piles of bodies being taken away. You would think that liberation by Russia, our ally, would be a good thing, but he did not feel good in going with them. The Russians said they would take them to Odessa, Russia and, from there, send them back to the United States. They divided the men into groups of 100. Brother Armand's group decided to try and escape, which they did, into the woods and to a road where they met an American convoy. They continued only to be stopped again by the Russians. They resisted until

they finally let them go. Just a few years ago at a P. O. W. meeting he found out that many of the men who went to Russia ended up working in the salt mines, never to be returned home.

June 1, 1945, Brother Armand was on a boat headed for the United States, saying he finally felt secure again. At home, they knew he was on his way but did not know exactly when he would arrive. One day, while his mother was outside on the porch, she cried out, "Here comes Armand." Mary ran out only to see a figure a long way off coming up their street. Sure enough, as the figure got closer it was Armand. Sister Josephine fell to the ground to kiss it as she had promised God, even before she greeted her son.

After his return, he could not seem to get over the death of Brother Chuck, asking God over and over, "Why? Everyone else came home, why not him?" God then blessed Armand with two different dreams.

In the first dream he saw himself sitting in a meeting in their home and he saw Brother Chuck walk in and walk straight toward him. He said to Brother Dominic Giovannone, sitting next to him, "Look, it's Chuck." He appeared transparent, but it was definitely he. He walked to Brother Armand and said, "Don't worry about me, because where I am is a good place." The dream ended, but he was still not completely over Chuck's death and God patiently gave him another dream.

In the second dream, Brother Armand dreamed he saw a large parade of soldiers marching up a street. They were about twenty abreast marching in perfect formation. As he looked he saw Chuck and called to him, but he did not acknowledge him, knowing a good soldier would never look to the right or the left. They were marching up a hill and at the top was a mansion. When Brother Armand saw where they were going, he told his brother Joe, "Come on, let's follow and when they break-up, we can talk to Brother Chuck" (knowing he was dead). They got to the mansion and began to look for him. Finally, after much looking, they found him. They began to ask many questions, Chuck looked at them and then they saw he was very happy. This ended the dream and also Brother Armand's unresolved feelings about his death.

Richwood, West Virginia Mission

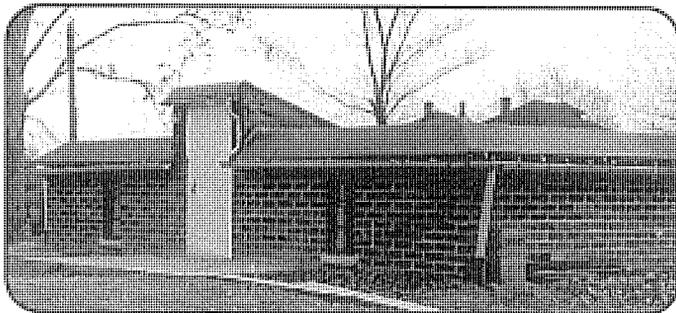
In 1945, Evangelist Dominic Giovannone and his son, Frank, started a work in Richwood, West Virginia. Over the years, several members were baptized there.

Warren Becomes A Branch

On January 19, 1946, the established mission was organized as a branch and Brother Dan Corrado was elected to preside. Brother Philip Dreer was first counselor and Brother Dominic Giovannone was second counselor. At this time, it was felt by the members that they should try and do something about getting a Church building of their own to meet in.

In January of 1947, at a special meeting held by the Warren Branch, a motion was passed that they would build a Church building on their lots on Fourth Street. At this meeting, some of the members felt that they wanted to return to Niles, Ohio. The result was that 27 members went to Niles and 28 members remained in Warren. Brother Nick Iorio and Elder Frank Giovannone were in charge of building the Church. Because of the Branch's being reduced in members, it was felt they would build a basement, rather than build a complete building.

The basement was completed and a dedication service was held in the fall of 1947. Brother Dominic Giovannone was elected to preside. Evangelist William Genaro was first counselor and Brother Panfilo Mancini was second counselor.



Warren Church Building on Fourth Street

The approximate cost of this building was between \$9,000 and \$10,000. They would meet in this building until September of 1969. (Bucci History, pp. 26-27)

An Experience

Brother Richard Ciarolla writes:

This happened to the Victor Ciarolla family in Champion, Ohio in 1948. They were doing some remodeling and had eight big sheets of sheet rock and a pile of 2 x 4's standing up in the garage. This day, after Brother Victor went to work, Sister Annie, who was eight months pregnant, and her small children decided to clean up the yard. She happened to go into the garage and the children followed. Somehow, she must have touched the pile of sheet rock and it fell down on little Virginia's legs (who was two years old). She started to cry and Joe (who was about 10 years old) got a 2 x 4, and God gave him the strength to pick up the pile of sheet rock far enough to pull Virginia out. Her foot was all black and blue, and her shoe was off.

Sister Annie tried to pick up the sheet rock and stand them back up again. Somehow, they fell again on her legs. She didn't have the strength to lift them off and she couldn't move. Finally, the neighbors heard the noise and came with help.

They thanked God for two miracles: Virginia's foot was all right and Sister Annie did not lose the baby, as the doctor had feared. The baby was born a fine healthy boy.

On April 22, 1951, the Warren brothers and sisters met with the Niles brothers and sisters. There were five baptisms: Joe Ciarolla, Dora Ciarolla, Millie Ciarrochi, Lena Mollica, and Betty Giovannone.

Ordinations

Brother Frank Giovannone was ordained an elder in 1947 and an evangelist in 1954. Brother Armand Genaro was ordained a deacon, and Sister Jean Genaro was ordained a deaconess. Brother Jonathan Molinato was ordained an elder in April 1952 and several years later moved to North Carolina for missionary work. In the late 1950's, Brother William

Genaro was ordained an apostle. Brother Nick Iorio was ordained an elder in 1952, and in 1954, he went to Italy on missionary work.

In October 1954, Elsa Colecchi came to America from Italy and settled in Warren. She was baptized shortly thereafter. She became interested in the Church through her brother, Victor, when she heard him pray while he was visiting in Italy.

Brother Peter Genaro and half of his family moved to California in 1955. Brother Pete and his wife, Sister Josephine, were staunch members. When we talked of going somewhere or doing something, Sister Josephine would always say, "If it's God's Will. Warren's loss was California's gain.

As an item of interest, of the young people of this time period, five sets of twins were born, namely: Giovannone Family (twin boys), Ciarolla Family (twin girls), Genaro Family (twin boys), and the Molinatto Family (twin girls and twin boys).

Brother Bill and Sister Theresa Genaro's granddaughter's life was spared when a car hit her. She ended up having her spleen removed and is still living in Texas as of this writing.

NILES, OHIO

On January 6, 1923, a mission was established in Niles, Ohio with eight members and two elders. The elders were Brothers Dominic DePiero and Tony Ruzzi from the Youngstown Branch. Other elders who helped were Brothers Joseph Corrado and Eugene Perri, Sr.

In the April Conference of 1923, an elder, Brother Peter Molinatto, was sent from Pennsylvania and placed in charge of the newly established Mission for a short while.

They first met in homes, then in storerooms. The last place was the Knights of Pythias Hall around 1936. Because some members lived in Champion Heights, it was decided to hold meetings in Warren, Ohio since it was more centrally located, making it convenient for the membership. Thus, from about 1936 to 1947, the Niles members met in the Warren Branch, with their membership being held by the branch. (Bucci History, pp. 23-24)

(Most of the subsequent narrative on Niles was provided by Brother Frank and Sister Edith Genaro and compiled by Sister Barbara (Genaro) Nuzzi.)

Warren and Niles Begin to Meet Separately

Prior to 1947, the brothers and sisters of the cities of Warren and Niles, Ohio met together as the Warren Branch. The desire to build a Church building caused much concern whether to build in Warren, Niles, or between the two cities. On February 6, 1947, a special meeting was held to discuss whether the saints residing in Niles would continue to meet with the Warren Branch if a new building were to be erected in the city of Warren. It was resolved unanimously by the saints in Niles to hold meetings separate from Warren because many had to ride the buses and get several transfers each time. The fact that the work was originally started in Niles also influenced the desire to have a mission there again.

On February 22, 1947, the General Church officers, conducted a meeting to divide the Warren membership into two locations, one in Warren and one in Niles. As a result of the meeting, the saints in Niles were granted the privilege to establish a mission in Niles and conduct their affairs independent of the Warren Branch.

Niles Becomes a Mission

At the General Church Conference held April 15, 1947, the Niles Mission was established by motion of the General Church Priesthood.

One Sunday, Brother Rocco Biscotti was coming to visit the Niles Mission. It so happened Brother Frank Genaro, who had recently been ordained on July 20, 1947, was told he would have to be at work that Sunday. He went to work with a heavy heart because he wanted so much to be in Church that day. As he was working at his baling machine, he prayed to God to break the machine. Sure enough the machine broke. The mechanic said it could be fixed in a short time and it was. His desire to be at the meeting still burned within his heart. He began working again and he told the Lord that the machine did not break enough and asked God to break it again. It did break again and this time it took

months before it was fixed. There was another machine there and his boss told him to go to the other machine because he had more seniority on the job. But he told his boss to let the other man work and he would go home. Those in Church that day rejoiced to see him come into the meeting. After Brother Rocco Biscotti finished his sermon, Brother Frank shared the experience he had that morning.

In April of 1950, a committee was appointed to look for a piece of property or a church or building that could be converted.

Niles Becomes a Branch

On September 17, 1952, a recommendation was forwarded to the General Church that the Niles Mission be established as a Branch with the consideration that the Girard Mission merge with them if the Conference permits. After permission was granted by the General Church, on October 22, 1952, the Niles Branch was organized by Brothers Travis Perry and Ralph Berardino. The officers were as follows:

Presiding Elder	Brother Dan Corrado
First Counselor	Brother Phil Dreer
Second Counselor	Brother Frank Genaro
Teachers	Brothers Sam Costarella and Jack Ford
Deacons	Brothers John Costarella, Sylvester Mollica, and Alex Giovannone
Deaconesses	Sisters Sarah Mollica and Loretta Corrado

A Remarkable Healing

Brother Frank E. Genaro recalls the following experience:

Sometime during 1954, Brother Joe Genaro's son, Ronald, came down with a double hernia. At times this would cause him to curl up like a ball and unable to straighten out his legs. They would rush him to the doctor and he would work on him to allow him to walk. This happened twice. The doctor told them he would have to be operated on.

On Sunday morning, they brought him to Church to be anointed before taking him to the hospital. At the close of the service, we greeted one another, and, when Sister Edith Genaro shook hands with Brother

Joe Genaro, the Spirit of God flowed between them and she said to him, "Believe and you will receive."

They went home, got him ready and packed his little bag. While they were doing this, Ron came down with a burning fever. They called the doctor and he told them not to bring him to the hospital if he had a fever. Surgery would be postponed for a later date. In the meantime, they prayed fervently that the Lord would intervene and their son would not have to be operated on. Brother Joe went into his bedroom and began to pray. As he was praying, the room lit up brighter than the sun. He felt the power of God come down upon him and he knew right there and then that Jesus was present. They both felt the presence of the Lord and Brother Joe exclaimed, "Our son is healed!" The Lord showed us His healing power and, indeed, he was healed.

Brothers Joe Genaro and Jack Ford were ordained elders on April 10, 1955. Later that year in October, Brother Frank Genaro was elected presiding elder and for the first time the present location of the Niles Branch was considered for purchase.

Sister Carmella Genaro presented the following dream regarding this matter:

One night I dreamed I saw this building which had been vacated and behind it was an old home. Our brothers were working very hard remodeling this home. After they got done with the home, they started on the building. I then awoke from the dream. When word came that our brother had found a building, it was the same one I saw in my dream.

Niles Seeks a House of Worship

The Niles Branch decided to buy a piece of property for \$12,500 and a down payment of \$5,000 was made in October 1956 on a building that would be their future Church home.

The house in the back was remodeled and sold for \$7,500, which paid off the property. Brother Tony Picciuto put up a brick front on the building. Brother Dominic Toto was in his early 80's, but he was the head carpenter helping and showing the brothers how to accomplish the work to be done. This building had been a store where people came to buy

natural food, and now they had turned it into a Church where people could buy “milk and honey without money or price.”

Church Building Dedication

The Church of Jesus Christ dedicated its new Church building on August 25, 1957 at 614 Warren Avenue in Niles, Ohio. Visitors were present from Youngstown, Warren, Kinsman, and Painesville, as well as the local area.

Our morning service was opened by Brother A. A. Corrado of Youngstown, choosing for his text 1st John 5:4, “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” At the close of the meeting, Joanne Costarella asked to be baptized. (Loretta Corrado, *The Gospel News*, November 1957, p. 2)

Three Experiences

(1) Brother Russ and Sister Lena Martorana had a son, Wayne, who suffered asthmatic attacks as an infant. They often took him to the doctor and many times had asked the ministry to anoint him. When he was four years old, his mother once again pleaded for him because the doctor told them there was no more they could do for him. Brother Joe Genaro went to perform the anointing and, while calling upon God to heal Wayne, Brother Frank Genaro arose under the power of God and told Brother Joe to rebuke it in the name of the Lord three times. When Brother Joe heard the words, he did rebuke it in the name of the Lord. That day Wayne was healed.

(2) Brother Peter Genaro had suffered a stroke and the doctor did not give him any hope. He asked his son, Brother Frank Genaro, to anoint him. As he was praying that God would help him, the story of Hezekiah’s life being extended came to him and he asked the Lord to extend his father’s life 15 years also. During his later years, he suffered acute appendicitis and recovered. Another time, a blood vessel burst, the doctors didn’t expect him to live. By God’s great mercy he did live. The next morning, he was up eating breakfast. Brother Peter lived 15-1/2 years (after the stroke) [until] the Lord called him home.

(3) Brother Frank Genaro said that he had a great desire in his ministry that the Lord would touch someone's heart to be baptized. On the last Sunday of January 1948, his father was ill with the stroke and his mother, sister and wife were all at home. Others were missing that day also. He opened the meeting that afternoon and as he looked upon the few members there, he thought to himself what good could come from this meeting. As the congregation sang the hymn, "Living for Jesus," the Spirit moved upon three young women (Esther Corrado, Phyllis Corrado and Jean Genaro) to ask for their baptisms. They were baptized on the following Sunday along with three more—Jackie, Tony and Sam Salerno (making a total of six). God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

KINSMAN, OHIO

(This material was provided by the Kinsman Historians: Sisters Anna Jackson, Rosalie Mott and Rose Corrado).

The Kinsman, Ohio Mission is the result of a desire placed in the hearts of three brethren—Philip Dreer, Jack Ford and Howard Jackson. In the summer of 1955, after much seeking, fasting and prayer, Brother Jack and Sister Esther Ford were directed to a place called Kinsman, Ohio. They found a house with a "For Sale" sign on it and were going to buy it. The owner said to Brother Jack, "You couldn't guess what nationality I am." It was then a voice spoke to Brother Jack and said, "Tell him he is an American Indian." The man was very surprised, but to Brother Jack it meant that he was directed to the home of one of God's chosen people. Although the people later decided not to sell, Brother Jack and Sister Esther felt God had directed them to Kinsman, Ohio. Later they returned to the same location, this time with Brother Howard Jackson, who saw a home, which they purchased. He and his family moved there in October 1955. Later that same year, a home close to Brother Howard's became available to the Fords and they moved in December.

During this time, the families continued to meet with the Niles, Ohio Branch but had a great desire to hold services in Kinsman. Brother Ford

was given permission by Brother William H. Cadman to hold services in Kinsman, with himself and Brother Philip Dreer, who was attending Kinsman, presiding over the meetings. These meetings were being held in Brother Howard Jackson's home.

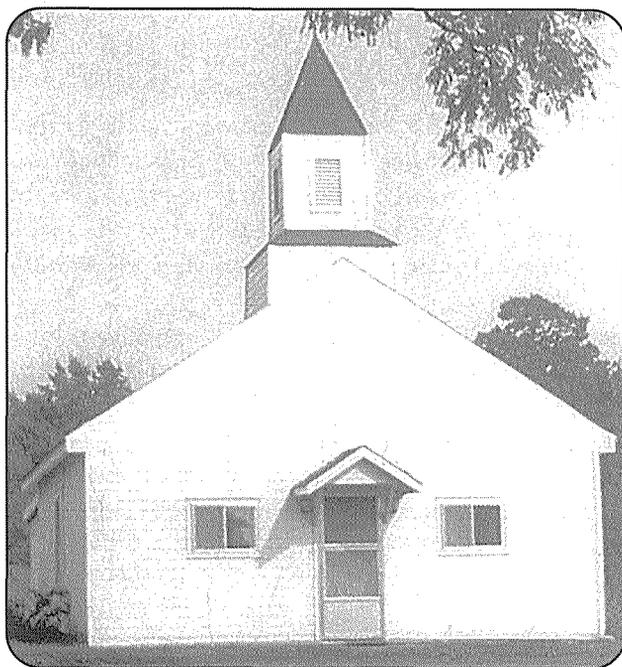
In January of 1956, Brother Philip Dreer also purchased a home in Kinsman. He offered to have his garage converted into a meeting place. Everyone worked diligently to remodel it. A steeple had been constructed for the building, and after it was completed, they wondered how they were going to get it onto the roof. While thinking about this, a car entered the driveway. Three men got out of the car and asked if they needed help—so with their help, it was lifted onto the roof. The steeple was in place just in time before a thunderstorm. Surely these men (who were strangers to them) were directed by God to come.

Their first baptism in Kinsman was Joseph Kampert in February of 1956, with Brother Jack Ford performing the baptism. Kinsman became an established mission under the Niles, Ohio Branch on April 21, 1956 with a membership of ten. Their first meeting in the Church Building (which took seven months and twelve days to complete) was held on August 19, 1956. The dedication was held on August 26, 1956 with Apostle Gorie Ciaravino of Detroit, Michigan as special guest speaker.

In November of 1956, Brother Howard received a very serious cut to his wrist while working on a furnace pipe at his home. Brother Howard recalled how his wrist was dirty with soot and bleeding. "I washed it off and put Blessed Oil on the cut. The oil was like a weld and stopped the bleeding. I went to the doctor and it took 26 stitches to sew it up."

On the last Sunday of 1957 Brother Jack Ford had the following experience while passing the Lord's Supper: When he returned to the sacrament table after passing the bread, he noticed one piece of bread left on the plate. A voice spoke to him and said, "If Christ were here He would partake of that piece of bread."

Frequent visitors were Douglas and Bertha Ford from Canada. On February 9, 1958, Brother Jack Ford baptized Bertha Ford in a pond on the property beside the Church. (This was the second baptism in Kins-



Kinsman Church Building

man.) It was the coldest day of the year (five degrees below zero) and the ice had to be broken, but they all felt warmed by God's everpresent spirit. Bertha's husband (Doug Ford) warned her that she would catch a cold if baptized on such a frigid day, but she heeded God's call anyway. Instead of Sister Bertha, her husband was the one who succumbed to a cold.

Kinsman has been very active as a small mission, which includes a Sunday School, an MBA and a Ladies' Circle. There have been many visitors over the years. God's blessings have been manifested in the many spirit-filled meetings, prayer services, inspiring programs presented and the performance of holy ordinances.

GIRARD MISSION

Brother T. D. Bucci writes:

In 1945, I organized a Mission in Girard, Ohio under the Youngstown Branch. We rented a hall for Sunday worship and on Wednesdays we met at various homes. This mission was maintained for five years, and many times we felt the power and blessings of God. In 1950, the mission was dissolved; some members went to Niles, and some to Youngstown.

I then began to labor in other fields. This same year, 1950, I was ordained into the office of evangelist. I felt a greater responsibility of evangelizing the Church and the Restoration, especially to bring the great things that are in store for the Seed of Joseph (the American Indian). I began mission work in the Oklahoma Indian Territory in 1957. I termed it a scouting mission. I returned in the following years to Oklahoma: 1959, 1961, 1964, 1971, and 1979.

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

(Most of this narrative was supplied by Sister Carmella D'Amico)

In 1931, Brother Frank Rosati left the city of Rochester with a determination never to return because of a family misunderstanding. He went to Detroit, Michigan and met Brothers Anthony Pietrangelo and Mario Francione. They gave him the testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which he accepted, and it brought great joy to his heart.

One night he knelt down to pray and remembered his sister and other relatives he had left in Rochester. How wonderful it would be if he came back and brought the Gospel to them! As he prayed, he felt the spirit of the Holy Ghost fall upon him and was greatly blessed. His desire to return to Rochester increased immensely.

Upon his return to Rochester Mr. and Mrs. Castronovo and Mr. and Mrs. Simone accepted the Gospel and desired to be baptized. He sent a letter for Brother Ishmael D'Amico to come and baptize the new converts.

Even before receiving this letter, Brother Ishmael had an experience in Detroit in which a woman told him in a dream: "This mission work belongs to you. Take care of it." He then saw Brother Frank with a message. The next day, Brother Ishmael received the letter requesting him to go to Rochester.

The four new converts were baptized November 15, 1932—The Church of Jesus Christ was established in Rochester.

The Simones and the Castronovos opened their home and services were held there for six months and two years, respectively. The word of God multiplied so greatly that for a while they went to the river every Sunday.

Brother Frank Rosati was called to be an elder, Brother Simone a deacon and Sister Simone a deaconess. Thus they became a mission under Detroit.

In 1934 God provided a small store at 70 Scranton Street for Church services, where God's blessings overflowed. On October 20, 1935, Brother Ansel D'Amico was ordained an elder and Brother Patsy Marinetti a teacher, and Rochester later became a Branch.

The store became too small so they looked for a larger building. In 1936 God provided a larger place at 550 N. Clinton Avenue, where they enjoyed many wonderful blessings. They increased both in number and spirit. The Word of God was spreading so rapidly that missionary work was started in Lockport, the Tuscarora Reservation and Palatine Bridge, New York.

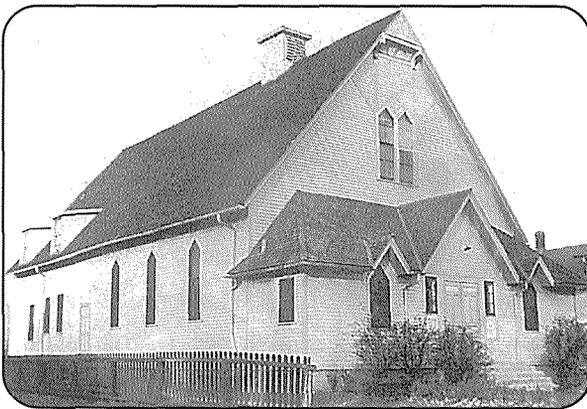
In the spring of 1936, they needed chairs for their new meeting place. They collected \$200.00 for 200 chairs. Brother Ishmael went to God in prayer saying, "Thou knowest we are all poor and we have gathered this money to buy these chairs—provide for us our needs." While he prayed, he saw a vision in which he received five letters from Detroit. The return address on one of them read, "O Ishmael, Man of God." He could not understand what this meant and asked God for its meaning. He heard a voice saying, "Your prayer has been put on the list with all the other prayers that the prophets of old have offered, for they prayed in the same

manner. In one or two weeks, you shall receive an answer.” After one week, he received a letter from Buffalo saying that 200 chairs for which the Church was looking were ready. The chairs were slightly used but they looked like new and met the needs of the saints.

In 1941, with God’s help, they purchased a building at 416 Wilder Street. In 1946, Brothers Paul D’Amico and Chris Trovato were ordained elders.

The Rochester Branch grew to over 70 members plus children. After World War II, Sister Florence Catena introduced Miss Edna Bachmann, a Julliard School of Music graduate, to the young people of the Church. Under the direction of Miss Bachmann, the Rochester choir was formed. In 1937, Brother Simone moved to Lockport and meetings were held in their home.

Many brothers and sisters passed away, transferred to different branches of the Church and some fell away. Their numbers decreased but God was faithful and always blessed and provided for them. In 1947, Ishmael, Julia, and Paul D’Amico moved to the Brooklyn, New York Mission.



Rochester Church Building on Wilder Street

Experience of Sister Grace Francione in 1953

I had the following dream while living in Rochester, NY. It was before missionary work began in Africa.

I was in the country and saw a gray and white horse galloping rapidly toward me. An angel was riding on the horse. As they came near, they paused. I saw the angel carrying an envelope. The angel said, "I go to bring this message to The Church of Jesus Christ in Africa."

I related this dream to the elders who were attending the October conference. During the conference meeting, Brother Cadman received a letter from Africa requesting missionaries to come and acquaint them with the Church. Brother Cadman then asked the elders at conference if there had been any experiences concerning missionary work. Brother Perry Simone remembered my dream and related it to them.

A Baptism

In 1957, Andrew Locci, the son of a sister who had immigrated from Italy two years prior, was baptized at 9:30 p.m. under flashlight. (*The Gospel News*, July 1957, p. 1)

Erection of a New Church Building

In 1958 they sold the Church building. After praying for guidance, Sister Carmella D'Amico had an experience. She dreamed that a tree was transplanted on the east side of the city. Brother Ansel D'Amico dreamed that he saw a man who told him, "I have a nice piece of land for you to build the Church."

For two years they rented a Union Hall on Dewey Avenue for Sunday services, and weekday services were held at Brother Ansel and Sister Carmella D'Amico's home.

The branch was able to purchase a piece of land at 1529 North Winton Road. This property was not for sale, but Brother Chris Trovato and his brother Carl worked very hard to convince the owners to sell it to us. We all felt that God intervened and changed their minds, and the land was sold to us.

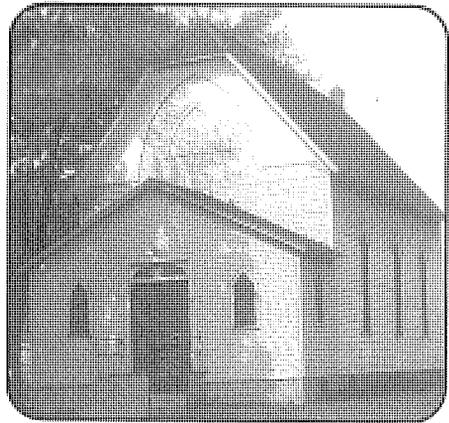
A simple but beautiful church building was constructed. This was accomplished through the leadership of Brother Ansel D'Amico with the assistance of many wonderful brothers: Aldo D'Angelo, Anthony and Dan Picciuto, Peter Ranieri, Eugene Kline, Bob Quinn, Emilio Carlini, John Romano, Joseph Straccia, Carmen Rossi, Fedele D'Antonio, Fred D'Antonio, Henry Berardi, Domenic Gagliardi, and Don Pietrangelo.

On December 31, 1959, New Year's Eve, the first service was held in our new building, and on July 31, 1960 it was dedicated with the church filled to capacity.

LOCKPORT, NEW YORK

Dedication of the Lockport, New York Branch Building

The Lockport, New York Branch building was dedicated on Sunday, March 24, 1946. Many of the brothers and sisters from Rochester, New York, traveled to Lockport on a chartered bus. There was also a number of visiting saints from other districts. As the bus unloaded, a line was formed and they began to enter into the church singing Hymn No. 351, "We're Marching to Zion." When all had entered the church building, Brother William Cadman offered a prayer, followed by Brother Ishmael D'Amico who prayed in the Italian language.



Lockport Church Building

Brother William H. Cadman introduced the morning service, reading from Genesis 28. He commented on the marvelous structure and appearance of the church building and exhorted them to allow God to dwell within their own temples. Just prior to the dismissal of the service,

two souls stood upon their feet requesting baptism. (Ishmael D'Amico, *The Gospel News*, May 1946, pp. 5-6)

Reflections of the General Church President

While at Lockport, New York attending the dedication services, I went in one of the cars to the lakeshore where two penitent souls were baptized. The weather was stormy; the lake was rough, [with] huge waves rolling in upon the shore one after another. The waves were sufficient to try the courage of those to be immersed therein. One was a lady, but she showed no signs of fear and bravely made a covenant to serve her God the balance of her days. Much responsibility rested upon Elder Mazzeo when he led both converts into the waves that they might be born of the water as taught by our Savior. It was about 18 miles of a drive from the church in Lockport to the lake and the same distance back to the church again. Quite a long ways they have to travel to baptize their converts. (William H. Cadman, *The Gospel News*, May 1946, p. 7)

The work in Lockport had already been in progress when Brother Paul D'Amico went to live there. With the assistance of the brothers from the Rochester Branch, the group was fed spiritually. In April 1950, Brother Perry Simone was ordained into the ministry and by October of the same year, Lockport was organized as a branch, with Brother Paul D'Amico the presiding elder, Brother Paul Pietrangelo the first counselor, and Brother Perry Simone the second counselor.

In April 1958, Brother Henry Berardi of Lockport was ordained into the Priesthood.

From the Lockport Branch efforts have been made to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles as well as the Seed of Joseph or the American Indians on the Tonawanda and Tuscarora Reservations. Also, many meetings have been held among the Gentiles in Niagara Falls and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (Bucci History, p. 21)

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

(Most of the material below was provided by Brother Mark Kovacic.)

Sometime in the early 1930s, Brother Rocco Biscotti, an apostle from the Cleveland Branch, came to Erie with another brother to visit three families who were friends of the other brother. Even though they felt a good spirit in visiting them, nothing further developed. Subsequently, a Sister in Cleveland related to Brother Biscotti, after their visit, she had a dream in which she saw a tree loaded with apples, but they were not yet ripe.

Evangelist John Mancini left Monongahela, Pennsylvania in the latter part of 1946 for Erie, seeking work and eventually the possibility of establishing a mission of the Church.

Obtaining work, he sent for his wife, Mary, and two children, in the early part of 1947. His father-in-law, Apostle Charles Behanna, Sister Margaret Behanna and their granddaughter, Sister Elaine Sacher, with her husband Herman, and children, arrived in Erie from Monongahela in March of 1948.

At this time, also attending were Claire and Ethel Morey who were baptized at a later time. The Mancinis had services in their home.

(John Mancini began to attend meetings a few Sundays a month with the "Dias Group," the Primitive Church of Jesus Christ, and eventually left the Church).

Sunday School Starts

Sunday School was started and held in the Mancini home until 1953, at which time a storeroom was purchased. Sister Esther (DiBattista) Dyer, her husband Bob and children moved to Erie in 1949 from the Glassport Branch. In 1951, Sister Phyllis (Bucci) Kovacic, her husband, George, and their son, moved to Erie from Youngstown, Ohio. Along with this little group, elders from various branches visited Erie regularly, the more frequent being Evangelists Ralph Berardino, Timothy D. Bucci and Anthony DiBattista.

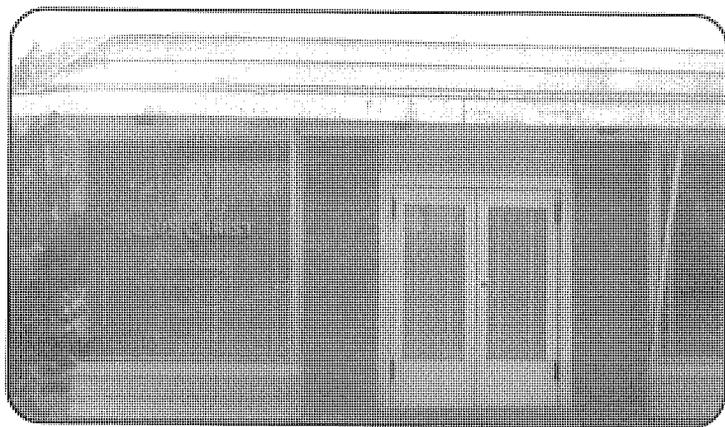
A Trip To Erie

Brother William H. Cadman writes:

... I boarded a bus for Erie, Pennsylvania where I visited the few members we have there... and spent one evening in their pulpit and enjoyed the evening. Our folks in Erie have purchased a very nice building and it is in a very prominent part of the city of Erie. A neighboring church about to build a new church gave our people their old pews and they are very good. The property is very well kept up and it is a credit to The Church of Jesus Christ. . . . Brother Mancini and his small congregation are hopeful of doing some good in Erie . . . (*The Gospel News*, July 1955, p. 6)

A Building Obtained

The storeroom that was purchased was located at 32nd and State Streets, and a mortgage was obtained for \$5,300. The building was converted into a chapel, two classrooms, a kitchen, and a multi-purpose area. Formal dedication services were held on May 27, 1956. At the dedication, the gift of tongues was spoken by Brother Eli "Buzzy" DiMasso, with the interpretation being "I am the Lord your God. Render Me your service." Brother Behanna performed much of the interior remodeling. At the dedication, Brother Joe Manes of Youngstown was baptized.



Erie Church Building on State Street, circa 1956

Potential for Future Growth

During this time, new converts were added to the mission, including Mr. and Mrs. Ed White, Elma and Orville Gross, Dwain Stevens, and John and Mary Mancini's two children.

Sister Florence LaRosa and her husband, Bill, moved to Erie in 1958, and, as the mission grew, it enjoyed the blessings of God in many ways, particularly the number of children who were being brought to Sunday School.

PERRY, OHIO

The Perry Branch was formerly known as the Painesville, Ohio Branch. The first meetings were held in the homes of Brothers Ernest Picciuto and Pete Raineri.

Brother Picciuto felt inspired to open his home to hold meetings in Painesville, so he made it a matter of prayer, along with a few others of the Cleveland Branch. (Bucci History, p. 18)

The first organization meeting of the Painesville Mission was held November 10, 1954. The charter members were: Apostle Rocco Biscotti (presiding elder) and his wife, Sister Angeline; Brother Ernest Picciuto and his wife, Sister Florence; Elder Pete Ranieri and his wife, Sister Madalena; Brothers Anthony and Dan Picciuto, and Brother Frank Ramundo. Early converts in the mission were: Sister Leda Prentice (Brother Pete and Sister Madalena's daughter), Dee (Dolores) Picciuto (Brother Dan's wife), and Eugene and Donna Kline. Sister Donna met the church through the Picciuto family.

During this beginning phase, the Painesville Mission was under the Cleveland Branch. In the March business meeting of 1955, a motion was made to ask conference for permission to purchase a lot to build a church. In September 1955, a motion was made to ask conference for permission to become a branch.

Brother Rocco Biscotti was the first presiding elder of the mission. He had an experience whereby he had three seeds to plant. One of these seeds was the Cleveland East Side Branch; another was the Cleveland West Side Mission; and the third was the Painesville Mission.

Ernest Picciuto lived in Painesville, Ohio on Jackson Street and used to go knocking on doors on Saturdays to tell people about the Church. In the initial phase of the Perry Branch, the small group met at the Picciuto residence on Wednesday nights.

As the group grew in number, it was decided in April of 1955 to hold the Wednesday evening meetings at the Armory located on the corner of Mentor Avenue and Fairgrounds Road. From there they met at the Grange Hall located on Route 84 from 1956 until the Church was completed in 1958, during which time over 30 baptisms were performed and many wonderful blessings experienced. Apostle William Genaro Sr. of the Warren Mission helped in the work at that time and they had frequent visitors from the district.

Brother Ernest Picciuto, in whose home the first meetings were held, went to his reward on June 30, 1955. However, in October of that same year, his two sons, Dan and Tony, accepted the call to continue the work where their father left off and were ordained into the ministry. In 1956, Brother James Velardi was also ordained an elder.

Brother Dan Picciuto had a wonderful experience concerning the preaching of the gospel to the Seed of Joseph, or the American Indian. In 1960, he left for Arizona where he established an Indian Mission on the San Carlos Reservation. (Bucci History, p. 18) (More about San Carlos will be in the next history volume.)

After Brother Ernest died in 1955, a Mr. Cole came to the Picciuto family and offered to exchange some acreage on Fairgrounds Road for acreage that the Picciutos owned on Jackson Street. Sister Florence Picciuto then donated that lot on Fairgrounds Road to the Church. Brother Daniel Picciuto offered to build a house on the lot and turn the profits over to the Church so the group would have enough money to begin construction of their own building.

Six thousand dollars was made from the sale of the house and in October 1956, \$2,150 was spent to purchase the three acres at 2743 South Ridge Road (Route 84), which is the current meeting place.

The plans were drawn by Brother Dan Picciuto, with Brother Peter Ranieri in charge of construction. Brothers Dan Picciuto and Eugene Kline were primarily responsible for building the Church. These brothers did the brickwork with much help from Brothers Tony Picciuto, Albert Ventura, and Mario Milano. Brother Emil Carlini, of Detroit, was in charge of plastering.

Dedication of The New Church Building

The Painesville Branch was dedicated on June 1, 1958 with Brother William H. Cadman delivering the dedicatory address. There were seven apostles present and also a good number of elders from various places. (Rocco Biscotti, *The Gospel News*, September 1958)

In October 1958, Gene Kline and Frank Rivera were ordained elders. In 1960, some of the charter members of the Perry Mission transferred to Cleveland Branch No. I.

KENT, OHIO

(This narrative was written from interviews with Brother Tony Picciuto and other members of the Kent Mission from that period. Mission records were also used to verify experiences, names, and dates.)

In September of 1956, Brother Tony Picciuto went to Kent, Ohio to attend classes at Kent State University. He wanted to find a place to stay in Kent while going to school. After much fasting and prayer, he began his search. He took many of the addresses off the "Rooms for Rent" section of the university's bulletin board and began his search. It was his desire to find a place to live where he could spread the Gospel. After looking at many rooms he went to 509 Lake St., which was the home of Bill and Ethel Fisher. He noticed there was a shared bathroom with only a curtain for privacy for the tenants, and decided this was not the kind of

place in which he wished to stay. As he came down the steps to leave, the Spirit of God fell upon him. This experience convicted him that this was the place God wanted him to stay. He then reached in his pocket and gave the Fishers the first month's rent (\$20). He told the Fishers he was an elder of The Church of Jesus Christ. They responded by saying they would have to watch their language around him.

Ethel Fisher worked at a local restaurant (The Robin Hood). She was having some problems at work and one day invited Brother Tony into the living room to talk. Brother Tony discussed the Church with her and invited her to attend. The Fishers attended several meetings in Warren, Perry, and Cleveland with Brother Tony.

After introducing Ethel to the Church, Brother Tony prayerfully discussed the Restoration of the Gospel with her. He said, "Mrs. Fisher, do you believe in prayer?" She said, "Yes." He continued, "Do you believe God answers your prayers?" Again she said, "Yes." Brother Tony then quoted James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Several days went by and then Mrs. Fisher approached Brother Tony. She said, "I had a dream last night." She then related the following dream. "I saw a field of beautiful flowers. A man dressed in white picked one of the flowers and placed it in the palm of his hand. He held it up and asked me, 'Do you see anything different about this flower?' She noticed the flower was gold." Mrs. Fisher felt this was a confirmation of The Book of Mormon. In 1957, while attending meetings in the Grange Hall in Perry, Ethel Fisher asked to be baptized and shortly afterward her husband, Bill, was baptized.

In December of 1957, the first meeting of the Kent Mission was held in Brother Tony's home. Three people asked to be baptized—Brother Tony's wife, Lydia, Lillian Manes, and Drew Whitaker.

The Gougler Hall on Gougler Avenue in Kent was rented for meetings. Brother John Manes from Youngstown attended regularly to help Brother Tony. Other visiting elders included Travis Perry, William Genaro, Mario Milano, Vince Gibson and Rocco Biscotti.

Ralph and Margie Breakiron met the church through Margie Breakiron's mother—Lily Teets of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Sister Lily was visiting with the Breakirons at their home in Kent and became ill. The saints of the Church notified Brother Dominic Bucci and he came and anointed her. Brother Bucci told Brother Tony about the Breakirons. Ralph and Margie Breakiron were baptized circa 1958.

On the Sunday of September 21, 1958, Clara Jobses came forward and asked for her baptism, and then Marian Oakes. Brother Tony had dreamed that night he was fishing in an ocean and caught three fish (but almost caught four) with the help of a bucket and he placed three of them in a pond, but one got away. Brother Tony wondered where was the third fish? They went to the water's edge and there Richard Jobses (Clara's Husband and son of the Breakirons) asked to be baptized. He was dressed in his suit and said, "Take me into the water just as I am." Brother Tony's experience was fulfilled in three souls being taken from the ocean (the world) and placed in a pond (the mission). One soul was not saved and the saints felt this fourth fish was Cecil Oakes, Marian Oakes' husband.

Also, in 1958, Susan Finley (the daughter of the Finleys who lived near the Fishers) was baptized. In 1959, Evelyn Crall was baptized and shortly thereafter her daughter Mary-Margaret, who was only 13 at the time, followed her into the waters. Meetings were held regularly in the homes of the Breakirons, the Jobses, the Caines and the Finleys.

4

History
of the
Michigan - Ontario
District

CHAPTER FOUR

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. John I:45, 46

THE ORIGIN

Upon observation, the serious student of the history of The Church of Jesus Christ in the Michigan-Ontario District will note that the cultural and personality traits of the early saints were reflected in the character and strength of the Church's development and growth. Notwithstanding the overwhelming influence and change brought upon these early forerunners by the Gospel, proper consideration should be given regarding the setting in which the Gospel took root. For it was the nature of this setting that distinguished the particular course of history that occurred.

We start with an important historical fact:

“Nearly four million Italians entered the United States between 1890 and 1921, [at which time] restrictive legislation enacted by the Federal government ended the period of free and large-scale immigration to this country.” (Nelli, p. 77)

The motivating force for many Italians immigrating to this country was to acquire the things of life not available to them in their motherland. Alexander DeConde, in *Half-Bitter, Half-Sweet: An Excursion into Italian-American History*, writes of this dream of a better life:

They have pictured the United States as a land where streets are paved with gold, where the poor can become rich, where work brings

real rewards, like white bread, cheese, and wine. When they finally came to America they suffered from shock; reality struck with a deep and puzzling ugliness. They toiled ceaselessly and endured exploitation. . . . (p. 377)

DeConde continues,

On the average, southern Italians brought with them about half as much money as did northern Italians, who carried with them into the United States slightly more cash than the average immigrant of any nationality. The southerner usually had so little capital and so little education that he could work only with pick and shovel, or at some other job requiring no skills, such as hod carrier or mortar mixer. "Here I am," he seemed to say, "Use me where you will, only give me my daily bread." (p. 82)

In time, the Italian character would show. DeConde further depicts ,

So concerned were most [Italian] immigrants with the steady pressure of earning their daily bread that at first they had little interest in, or time for, even the most meager of cultural pursuits. Contrary to his reputation for being hot-tempered and pleasure loving, the average Italian was sober, frugal, and hard working. He usually drank less alcohol and worked longer hours and harder than immigrants of other nationalities. . . . He was so eager to save, that he frequently injured his health to do so. He skipped meals, worked in perilous, congested, and unsanitary plants, and exposed himself to all kinds of harsh weather to earn a little money. Employers used great numbers of Italians because they were readily available, and in many kinds of work they produced good results. Even though the percentage of skilled workers among them was lower than among immigrants from Western Europe . . . the skilled Italian ranked high as stonecutters, mechanics, mariners, barbers, seamstresses, shoemakers, and as blue-collar workers in general. (p. 85)

The Italian contributions were meaningful. Lawrence Frank Pisani in his book, *The Italian in America; A Social Study and History*, further iterates that:

The [Italian immigrant] ditch-digger wore no white collar, and going home his shoes might be caked with mud of the street he was

helping to build, but with his fatigue he could feel a sense of pride that he was a man doing a man's job.

Although the Italians who wielded the pick and shovel, or who carried bricks or mixed cement did not go to work each day with the avowed object of building up America, in fact their work was helping to accomplish just that. They built state roads, barge canals, and dams for electric power and for drinking water. They worked on railroads, which linked the different parts of the country. In every generation, both private industry and government works find themselves in need of people who will perform for little pay work of great physical drudgery. At the close of the last century and the beginning of this, the Italians, scorned though they were, filled this need. The leaders of industry had ways of discriminating, of refusing work when they wanted to. There were jobs enough offered to the Italians, because their labor was wanted for the great projects of the country. (p. 90)

Needless to say, The Church of Jesus Christ was to employ this unlearned people to do a work far greater than that perceived worthy of "unlearned and ignorant men," as many of them committed their lives even unto death for the Gospel. Whereas once casual and indifferent religious practices existed among the Italian American, he now saw "truth" as never before presented, literally obtainable through the Church. Removed from his life were the relics and societal frustrations of the past. The Italian immigrant, once suspected by and isolated from the mainstream of the American community, became wholly appreciative of and indebted to his "calling" into the Church. In plainness and honor they became the exemplary brothers and sisters needed to carry out the Lord's work. (Russo, p. 196)

Certain sociological factors would influence the growth of the Church. Ethnic communities, in time, gained distinction in America's major cities. Pisani explains,

Most Italians . . . eventually wound up in clusters, small or large, in big cities, a part of a greater whole.

In the midst of one of these cities, the Italian community—"Little Italy"—existed as a small semi-independent universe of its own. . . . The forming of these communities was a matter both of choice and of

bowing to necessity. As newcomers, the Italian immigrants gravitated to the residence of an already settled relative or friend. . . . Living in close confines with each other, it would have been surprising had they not shown a great interest in each other's doings. (pp. 124-125)

It was here that these residents took refuge from this new and different culture, in somewhat familiar and close surroundings. So it was in the large industrial city of Detroit, where many Italian immigrants found work in her factories, and many households could be found with extended family members or boarders, often living under crowded conditions.

One characteristic of the Italian immigrant was the close family structure. Pisani also explains,

“As in Italy, at least at first, the family was a tight-knit unit, encompassing within itself a wide degree of relationships.”

So deep was the loyalty and closeness among the family that the father's “employed children turned over their salaries to him, and he doled out their allowances.” (Pisani, p. 131) His right to head of the house naturally extended over his married children's families when the early years of their marriage were spent under the father's roof. This tight-knittedness, in part, along with the familiarity of the clustered Italian-speaking communities, explains how the Gospel was to spread so quickly and prevalently among the Italian immigrant's friends and relatives. Upon his own conversion, often the first course of action was to give his testimony to anyone who would listen. Speaking only Italian, it was most likely to be told to the Italian neighbor or relatives living nearby, or his Italian co-worker in the factory.

It is of no wonder how the Italian-American played such a prominent role in the development of the Church in the Michigan-Ontario District. His ability to sacrifice out of necessity, endure the hardships of life, persist in the face of obstacles, became greatly enhanced once convicted in the doctrine of the Church. He brought to the Church a deeply ingrained work ethic and a strong uncanniness to understand and accept

the opportunities afforded him. In essence, his simple lifestyle brought a strong commonsense philosophy and humility that helped him to readily accept the Gospel.

The Gospel Story

The story of the establishment of the Gospel Restored in the Michigan-Ontario District actually starts quite inconspicuously many hundreds of miles across the Atlantic Ocean in Germany in 1904. A young Italian man of 24 years of age, Ralph Frammolino, found himself in Germany for summer employment. It was there that he and his friend, another young Italian man, set out to leave Germany to seek employment in America. Yet, before their intended departure, Ralph Frammolino was given a dream one night that, unbeknownst to him, would ultimately reveal the Gospel plan in Michigan and Ontario. Taken from her testimony, Sister Anna Frammolino (his wife) provides the details:

In the dream appeared an old man saying, "Where are you going?" And he (Ralph) answered, "I am going to the United States of America." The old man said, "No, you are not to go now, but later. Now you must return first to your city and marry and then leave for America." Brother Frammolino said to him, "No, I do not have a girl."

Then the old man showed him a large piece of land on which was a vineyard and he showed him a great and beautiful woman working, and next to this woman he saw me working. Then the old man said, "Do you know this girl?" And he (Ralph) answered, "Yes, she is from my city." (Anna was the sister to the male friend who had accompanied Ralph to Germany.)

The old man said, "You must go to marry this girl and then you may leave for America. This vineyard is reserved for you. This area is called Michigan, where you will work this land with this vineyard."

At this juncture, Ralph Frammolino changed his plans and returned to Italy in October. Without hesitation, he went to Anna's house to ask for her hand in marriage. Anna was only 16 years of age, and in no position to marry; yet the Lord worked upon the hearts of her family who consented to Ralph's proposal. Following their marriage on the

15th of December 1904, Ralph related his unusual dream to Anna and in the following June, he indeed, went to the United States and found his way to Michigan. Eventually, both Ralph and Anna settled in Detroit, and in time, being dissatisfied with the Catholic Church, became members of a Baptist faith.

Ralph would occasionally mention his dream in a lighthearted manner saying that he was, indeed, in the Michigan that the old man had talked of, but where was the vineyard he pointed out? Oddly enough, it was through a letter correspondence with Anna Frammolino's cousin, Brother Anthony DiBattista of Glassport, Pennsylvania, that the nature of Ralph's dream was revealed. Being newly baptized into the Gospel Restored, Brother Anthony gave the testimony of his conversion along with some scriptural beliefs that distinguished this Church from the others. As Anna began to read the Bible, a verse of scripture came to her with unusual force and meaning. So impressed was she with this, that she earnestly sought more help with its meaning.

The chain of events started with a letter that Anna wrote to her cousin, Anthony, requesting two things: an explanation of the verse in Revelation 14:6, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth," and of the meaning and representation of the "woman" found in the 12th and 14th chapters also of the Book of Revelation.

In March of 1921, Brother DiBattista answered her letter explaining the questions she posed, and he also enclosed an English copy of The Book of Mormon. He suggested in his letter that perhaps she could have someone read passages from The Book of Mormon to her since she was unable, at this time, to read the English language. As she removed The Book of Mormon from the wrapping, suddenly she was overcome with joy and the blessing of God filled her heart. Tears filled her eyes and she began to praise God while embracing The Book of Mormon to her bosom. The Spirit of God convinced her that The Book of Mormon was the Word of God and that the Gospel had been restored to earth by "an Angel flying in the midst of Heaven."

In that day when the Spirit of God began to work upon Anna, she resolutely stated to her husband that she finally met Christ through her cousin Tony DiBattista, for he had let her know what the "woman" represented and explained the angel who brought the Gospel to earth. She determined not to go to the Baptist Church anymore but continued to pray and correspond with her cousin, Tony. With every letter Tony sent, she understood more, and, as her faith grew, Anna requested that her cousin, Tony, or his brother, Patsy, come to visit. This resulted in Patsy and his mother arriving in Detroit on April 3, 1921 for a short stay with the Frammolinos.

Initially, Ralph treated Patsy's testimony with skepticism, but not for long. Brother Ralph Frammolino related:

"When Brother Patsy DiBattista came to Detroit and gave his testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I was doubtful of his word. A few days after I had heard of The Church of Jesus Christ, I prayed to the Lord that I might learn if this was the true Church.

That night I dreamed that a man guided me on a highway and, while walking, I saw a group of people. They seemed as though they were very much confused. The man told me that these people represented the Catholic Church. We walked a little farther on and I saw another group of people and the man told me that they represented the daughter of the Catholic Church; he referred to the Baptist Church, which I had previously left.

We then left this highway and climbed a mountain on a very narrow road. On the top of this mountain there were no buildings but the site was beautiful. The man told me that he wanted to build a Church here and wanted me to be the first to start The Church of Jesus Christ in the City of Detroit, like unto Peter of old." (Cadman History, p. 150)

The Lord had opened Ralph Frammolino's eyes and had helped him understand that the woman in the dream he had in Germany was The Church of Jesus Christ, which was to be planted in Michigan, and that he and Anna were to be the ones to introduce the Gospel. After two weeks, during which Patsy stayed in Detroit, Ralph was given a vision in which a great star was rising in place of the sun. From the star shone a great

light and from this light came a young man, tall, dressed as a warrior, and carrying a sword at his side. Instantly, Ralph found himself next to the warrior and was asked whether he would accept the Gospel. Ralph accepted, and then he was given the sword and instructed to use it when he needed.

Upon hearing of this vision, Anna knew that Ralph was ready to accept the Gospel, so she requested Patsy to write his brother, Tony, in Glassport and ask that the ministry come to Detroit to baptize them. The following week, on Tuesday, April 19, Brothers Joe Dulisse and Ishmael D'Amico entered their home.

Brother Ishmael D'Amico

If the letter from Anna Frammolino to her cousin Tony DiBattista requesting the interpretation of the scriptures pertaining to the Gospel Restored proved to be a key event leading to the origin of the Church in Detroit, it was the work of Brother Ishmael D'Amico that contributed greatly to the Church's early development.

Born June 11, 1890 in Abruzzi, Italy, Ishmael D'Amico first came to the United States in 1907 seeking employment opportunities. Being only 17 years of age, he embarked on an adventurous undertaking—working the railroads from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Cordova, Alaska. Meeting with extreme physical obstacles, sickness, unemployment, and much discouragement, Ishmael found his way back to Pennsylvania and, in March of 1910, back to Italy.

On March 11, 1912, Ishmael left again for the United States, although this time he was married. He came alone to set up a home for himself and then he sent for his wife. Being settled with his wife and young children in Glassport, Pennsylvania, Ishmael was first given the testimony of the Gospel by Brother Joseph Corrado in 1918. A year later, Ishmael was to render obedience to the Lord and his life was to be forever changed, with his greatest desire now to labor for the Lord. In being newly ordained as a minister, Brother Ishmael relates:

I continued on in the Church doing my best, but I always had a great desire to spread the work of God; I fasted and prayed often. One Wednesday night in March (1921) we had a testimony meeting in Church and many testified that they were spiritually weak. Ministers testified the same things. My heart was so pained at hearing all these testimonies of weakness that I went home very saddened. I prayed to God that He would remove this spirit of weakness from our midst and that He would give us strength. I also asked God to lead the way that His word might be expanded. I was guided to take the Bible and to read so that my heart would be comforted. While my eyes were closed as though I were sleeping, I heard a voice, but I did not understand what it said. I, believing it was someone of my family calling me, went to see, but my family was asleep. I returned to my room and started to read again and the voice called again saying, "Awake." When this voice said, "Awake," a flame came upon me and went through my entire body. The second time the voice spoke, that flame entered my body and it seemed to burn me. It happened four times, but I did not understand the meaning of these things. I went to bed and that night my body seemed filled with a supreme power. (Ishmael D'Amico, *My Testimony*, pp. 14-15)

The following day, Brother Ishmael met Brother Charles Ashton and told him about his experience of the previous night. Although Brother Ashton could not give an interpretation, he felt the experience was a good sign. Three days later, the answer was given in the form of Brother Patsy's letter to his brother Anthony regarding Anna's request for baptism, which ultimately reached Brother Ishmael. Brother Ishmael continues:

(W)hen I read this letter, I was filled with the Spirit of God and a voice spoke saying, "This is your calling."

This letter was brought to the home of Brother Fred Smith, and, while he read it, he turned to me and said, "Brother D'Amico, do you want to go to Detroit and take charge of this work?"

I said, "If this is the Will of God, I will do it." Brother Ashton then came by and Brother Fred Smith showed him the letter. When he read the letter, he asked me the same question that Brother Fred Smith had asked me. They knew that it would be very difficult for me because I had a large family to keep. I was ready to go to Detroit, Michigan to do

the Lord's Will to plant the Gospel and establish His Church. I knew that He would take care of my family. (*My Testimony*, p.15)

Brother Ishmael continued to pray for guidance in this matter. Two nights later he dreamed he was walking into a great building where a man confronted him "who looked like Satan." This man did all he could to prevent Ishmael from leaving. But Ishmael, holding an iron bar, reacted boldly proclaiming, "I have the authority of Jesus Christ, and with this iron I will smite thee." Immediately, the ground opened up and engulfed the man. Following, the doors of the building opened to reveal a large field of wheat, houses, trees, and streets.

A second dream was given to Brother Ishmael in which he saw Brother William H. Cadman give him a beautiful white suitcase. Upon receiving it, Brother Ishmael was instructed by Brother Cadman, "Go to your destination." Taking the suitcase, Brother Ishmael began to walk, seemingly all night, on a road, which led to a city. Upon awakening, he knew for certain that he would be used as a missionary in Detroit. Brother Ishmael writes:

The week after I had had this experience, the Rock Run Branch had a meeting to see whose place it was to go. . . . I had prayed that the Lord would reveal His Will to the other brethren (that I was to go. . . .) Brother Joseph Dulisse decided to go with me.

We left Glassport, Pennsylvania on April 19th, 1921. When we reached Detroit, we went to the home of Brother Ralph Frammolino. (This was at 5321 French Road, formerly known as Kirwin.) We pronounced peace on that home. (*My Testimony*, p. 16)

The First Meetings

An enormous outpouring of the Spirit of God insured the work's divinity and significance from the onset. Shortly before the Brothers Ishmael D'Amico and Joseph Dulisse arrived, when Brother Patsy DiBattista went to pick them up at the railroad depot, Anna's daughter, Louise, received an experience from the Lord. According to Sister Anna:

[She] was 15 and wanted very much to help me. . . . She was standing on a chair to reach for the dishes to set the table. All of a sudden, she began to cry and said, "Mama, who took the chair from under my feet?" I looked at her and said, "No one, and your feet are on the chair." When I looked at her face, she was like an angel and I said, "Luisa, do not be afraid. It is the Spirit of the Lord that has transported you, and you believe that you're not on the chair."

Upon witnessing this experience, Anna knew that the Lord was in their presence even before the brothers arrived. Three more experiences would be given that night. The first occurred shortly after Brother Ishmael had retired for bed. The household had spent the evening discussing the matters of the Lord, and now Brother Ishmael began to contemplate their discussion, feeling that Detroit was like a wilderness as far as the Gospel was concerned. Brother Ishmael:

While I was resting in bed but not sleeping, I saw a hill and upon this hill there appeared to be a road under construction. Upon the hill there was a telephone pole and I saw a large dove standing upon this pole. From the place where the dove was resting could be seen the city of Detroit, which was below, and with a loud voice the dove was shouting constantly, "Peace, peace," its voice could be heard from afar.

After a period of time, the dove disappeared and then I saw two men carrying it in their hands. These men started from one end of the city and began to go from house to house and as they approached the door to enter, the door would open of itself and the dove would enter and shout with a loud voice, "Peace" and as it would come out, the door would close again of itself. This would happen at every house they went into. Throughout the night this vision lasted with these two men and the dove going from house to house.

At the end of the vision, I beheld a beautiful room, which was illuminated, and in this room was a large table prepared. I also saw a bride and bridegroom who were being honored by many people.

When the vision disappeared, I found myself giving glory to God for the wonderful blessing He had bestowed upon me during the night. (Cadman History, p. 148)

Later that night, Anna was awakened by Louise. Her daughter excitedly told of a vision she had just received that showed the front sidewalk

bordered with remarkably beautiful roses. But in the center of one plant was a serpent that tried to frighten her. Yet, she remained undaunted. Next, she found herself with Brother Ishmael being baptized in a river. She saw a bright light from the sky dividing into two rays, one going over her head and the other over Brother Ishmael's head.

Upon hearing this experience, Anna began to meditate and pray upon Louise's vision, and before the morning broke, Anna as well was given a vision:

(T)he Lord . . . showed me a flag waving over the roof of my house; the flagpole was planted very deep in concrete from the basement. I thought to myself, from what corner of the house does the flag wave? Then someone said to me to go across the street so that I could see better at what corner it was found. And so I did go outside and saw that the flag waved over the bedroom where the brothers of the holy ministry slept and Pat DiBattista, my cousin. All three slept in one room. Then I said, "Lord, I thank you for allowing me to receive your servants in our home." And the Lord said, "Who could ever doubt that this is the true Church?"

In the morning, Louise immediately told her vision to the ministry, to which they responded, "Who could stop you when the Lord has manifested Himself in such a grand way to you?"

Later that night, April 20th, the first meeting was held in their home. Among the handful of friends invited were Giuseppe and Maria Giansante (Johnson). During the course of the meeting, Brother Ralph Frammolino arose from his seat to exclaim that he had heard a bell ringing, as well as beautiful violin music being played. Brother Ishmael was to later remark, as a confirmation, of the glory of God witnessed in that meeting.

From the visitors attending Wednesday's meeting, only the Giansantes returned for the Friday and Saturday meetings. During this time, Giuseppe was given a dream showing himself in a deep valley that had a river of clear water. After being guided by a Heavenly voice and he himself exerting considerable effort, he was able to pass to the other side of the river. He then turned around and saw from a distance the river's depth

through which he passed. At that moment he was covered with blessings that could never be forgotten.

Now being thoroughly convinced of the Gospel message, on Sunday, April 24th, 1921, the first five members in Detroit were baptized—the first one being Anna Frammolino, followed by her husband Ralph, their daughter, Louise, and Maria and Guiseppe Giansante. Even though the saints that day would bask in the glory of the Lord, the evil one would also begin an onslaught of persecutions common to all of the righteous servants of God who have endured over the ages.

A New Road - A Difficult Walk

In the closely-knit Italian-American lifestyle, which regarded family unity and loyalty essential elements for survival, Sister Anna's baptism threatened the very fabric of the family's security. Those who needed the familiarity of the past and were unable to understand the reasons for this conversion into a seemingly strange new religion reacted with fear, which led to anger and persecution. The reason was more simply put by Sister Anna who in reflection felt that Satan was the source of the persecution as symbolized by the serpent in her daughter's vision.

Even as they began the walk down French Road to the river to be baptized, Sister Anna's sister who lived next door, and Ralph's brother and family who lived in the upstairs flat of Ralph's house, came outside and began mocking and ridiculing the seemingly foolish proselytes. The jeering so increased that many curious neighbors actually began to join in. Sister Anna:

In those days, we had no buses, no cars as today. We had to walk . . . our enemies began their work, but we were able to walk with joy. Although they laughed at us, it gave us more courage to continue on to the waters of regeneration . . . and so we continued to the water where I can never be able to express how our joy was felt, even to consider the grace that was fulfilled—the dream Brother Frammolino had in 1904, in Germany—for him was prepared a land with a vineyard.

Brother Ishmael baptized the five candidates, and upon the groups return back to the house they found that their tormentors had gone inside. But the harassment resumed when their relatives realized that the meeting was to continue with the ordinance of confirmation. However, the loud ruckus of clanging pans and banging from the upstairs could not intimidate the ministers or the new converts. After Brothers D'Amico and Joseph Dulisse confirmed the five, both Ralph and his daughter, Louise, testified of seeing a personage in a vision writing the names of the newly baptized in gold letters in a book.

Another sign of encouragement occurred shortly after these baptisms when Brother Joe Dulisse was given a dream, “. . . of a man in an ancient garment showing him five bushels of wheat and telling him, ‘Eat of this wheat, more is coming.’” (*The Gospel News*, December 1989, p. 2) This dream would serve as confirmation of more baptisms to follow, but for the situation at hand, it provided a much-needed means toward strengthening the group’s resolve to stay the course; for, as the Frammolinos began to experience the richness of their new life, their families’ resentment continued to grow. Sister Anna’s mother, who previously lived with Anna, left and went to live with another daughter. There, they began to counsel and influence their brother’s mind against the Frammolinos. Anna’s brother denounced her publicly and she was actually struck on two occasions by one of her relatives.

Brother Ralph’s natural brother, who lived above them in the house, also immediately began to resist the change. It was arranged by the sibling to have someone come to the Frammolino’s home and proceed to beat Ralph for his refusal to relinquish his stand for the Gospel. Bloodied from the blows, Ralph proclaimed he would “rather die than to leave The Church of Jesus Christ!” With these persecutions, their resolve to serve the Lord was strengthened. (It should be noted that in later years, some of the relatives made amends for their behavior. Another brother, Leonardo Frammolino, and his wife, Michelina, were not against them, and eventually were baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ, remaining faithful throughout their lives.)

In spite of the persecution, the group's faith did not waver. And the work of the mission progressed, though ever so slowly at first. After three months' work in Detroit, Brothers D'Amico and Dulisse returned to Pennsylvania; but shortly thereafter, the Church sent Brother Ishmael back to Detroit for further missionary work. Brother Ishmael decided to move his family from Glassport to Detroit. Brother Ralph offered the upstairs flat of his home for the D'Amicos to live in and set aside a room where the services would be held.

Of June of 1921, Brother Ishmael writes,

. . . I had a dream in which I saw Brother Charles Ashton giving me a license with "Evangelist" written on it. . . . Since I had been called to do the work in Detroit, everyone agreed that I should be ordained an evangelist of this Church. (Ishmael D'Amico, *My Testimony*, p. 16)

In the General Church July Conference of 1921, which met in the Jefferson Church building near West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, Brother Joseph Dulisse reported on the work being done at Detroit, Michigan with the five baptisms. It was at this time the Detroit Mission was organized as a work under the Rock Run, Pennsylvania Branch, placing Brother Ishmael in charge.

The First Ordination

The setting surrounding the first ordination in the mission—of Sister Anna's calling to the office of deaconess—would be of a miraculous nature. Since the law and order of the Church requires another deaconess to wash the feet of the candidate prior to the ordination, and the new mission did not yet have a deaconess, the ordination had to take place in Cleveland, where another branch of the Church was established. Therefore, on the 13th of August 1921, Sister Frammolino, one of her daughters, and Brother Ishmael left for the trip by train. But, upon arriving in the city, Brother Ishmael discovered that he had either forgotten or lost the address to the Church in Cleveland.

Yet, when Sister Frammolino inquired whether or not he had the address of someone in Cleveland, Brother Ishmael simply replied, "The Lord will provide." Arriving at 2:00 pm, they had no bearings, and, upon asking a police officer for assistance, he replied, "Only God can take you where you want to go." Brother Ishmael continues:

I turned my heart to God, saying, "Oh God, you have so many messengers; you can direct us to our destination to meet the brethren." Suddenly, a man appeared to me. I don't know where he came from; he came so fast. . . . He greeted me and asked where I was going.

Then he said, "I know that you come from Detroit, and I know the place of your destination. I am going there, too! . . . If you want to go directly . . . take the next streetcar. . . ." We all boarded the streetcar together.

He then began to talk about the prophecies of old; he said, "We have arrived in the days of the beginning of sorrows, where wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, etc. are coming upon the earth." He also spoke of other things that would come to pass and when I heard this man speak such wonderful words, I was filled with joy. (*My Testimony*, p. 17)

Within two blocks of the regular streetcar stop, this visitor instructed the conductor to stop. Initially, the conductor refused, but, upon gentle persuasion by the visitor, he obliged. In following further directions of what streets to walk and streetcar to take, the travelers finally reached their destination. It was there, at a streetcar stop, the travelers met the astonished Brothers Joseph Corrado, Peter Garofalo, and Vincent DiTomaso. In hearing of this bewildering experience, Brother Joseph Corrado would exclaim, "Brother Ishmael, that was not a man who guided you here, but it was a messenger of God." (*My Testimony*, p. 18)

Upon returning back to Detroit and relating this experience, Brother Ralph Frammolino told of the ". . . vision, where he had seen a man descending from a cloud in heaven and stopping by (Ishmael's) side. After the streetcar left, the same cloud took this man up into heaven." (*My Testimony*, p. 18)

“My Mother”

By Brother Carl Frammolino:

My mother, who had a third grade education in Italy, wrote letters to that country on behalf of those who could neither read nor write, which included many of them. She would also read them the letters they had received from their relatives and friends in Italy. It was so touching to see and hear one of the saints describe to my mother what they wanted to be said and how she should say it. After composing the letter, she would read it back for their approval or comments. It was very special to observe how the process was completed. As I reflected upon this, I realized it was a great privilege for her to be so entrusted and how seriously she took on this kindly task. The reaction of the person for whom the letter was being written or read was very pronounced, and many times I noticed, at a distance, their tears of joy or sadness over the news either being dispatched or received.

From Humble Beginnings

Although the Lord continued to bless their small gatherings with great signs, miracles, dreams and visions, it would be five months before the membership would begin to increase. Oftentimes, it was through a myriad of conditions in which these individuals were unwittingly led by the hand of God to Detroit and, ultimately, the Gospel. It was a mysterious plan that drew from the poor and relied upon the meek to establish His work amidst this industrious citizenry.

Antonio Molisani

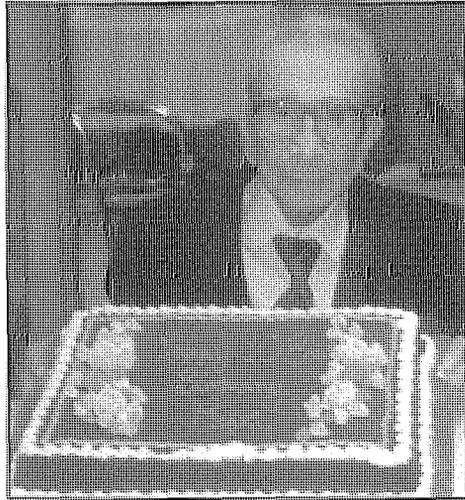
Perhaps the most moving of these accounts recalls a poor, orphaned Italian boy left to face the uncertain and harsh realities of his life. Born out of wedlock on March 4, 1885 in Casalordino, Italy, young Antonio Molisani's hard existence of a farmhand was accentuated by the beatings of cruel foster parents, never allowing him to eat at the family's dinner table nor sleep at night in the house, but in the stable with the animals. He didn't own a pair of shoes until he was 16 years of age.

Upon seeing this horrid condition, a neighbor offered to give Antonio enough money to emigrate, at 16 years of age, to America. He made the 22-day trip, alone, in the bottom of the ship, “Julius Caesar,” where the livestock was slaughtered to feed those on the upper deck.

The stench was unbearable. I was sick through the whole trip—hadn’t seen daylight until the day I arrived.

Distraught and lonely and not having any parents, relatives, schooling, skills, friends or money, I inquired where there were Italian people living. I found a family and boarded with them. The next day I went looking for work. My first job was pulling horses for 50 cents a day for 10 hours. After working at different jobs, I saved enough money and came to Detroit where the wages were better—\$1.75 for eight hours work at the Detroit Water Works.

Is it any wonder that I became an atheist? Many times I cursed the day I was born and kept telling myself that there was no God in heaven, because, if there was a God, why was life so cruel to me from the time I was born? (*The Warren [Michigan] Weekly*, March 7, 1990)



Antonio Molisani, 108 years old

But God had been with Antonio all along, and soon he would fulfill his role in the Master’s grand plan. In 1909, Antonio returned to Italy to find and marry his wife, Maria Gaetanuccia Julienne. A few months later Antonio returned to Detroit, but Maria chose to stay and tend to her gravely ill mother. Even though Antonio would make several return trips, World War I would cause an extended separation for fear of being drafted into the Italian army, so he refrained from going back. It was during this time that Antonio became friends with the Frammolino fam-

ily, and Anna, quite characteristically, invited him to come hear the Restored Gospel. Antonio remembers:

I said I didn't believe in God and in no way am I going to join you five ragheads. I would sit on her front porch while they were having their service indoors, and I would tell anyone that would pass along the sidewalk that, if they wanted to see a side show, to come in the house. I made fun and persecuted them for five months until one Friday in September. Sister Frammolino was very patient with me and continued to invite me to all their meetings.

This one particular Friday, she said to me, "Tony, we are reading The Book of Mormon this evening; why don't you come to the meeting." In my mind, I thought that in order to get her off my back, I would go just this one time. Brother Ishmael opened the service and read in First Nephi the 8th chapter, Lehi's dream about the river, the tree of life and the rod of iron.

The words struck me so forcibly, especially the part where Lehi saw the great and spacious building where people were pointing their finger and mocking those who did come forth to taste of the fruit. I became convicted immediately and said to myself, "I don't care who mocks me or points their finger at me, I, too, want to taste the fruit." I declared my intentions to Brother Ishmael and I was baptized that Sunday, September 10, 1921.

Before long, his wife and daughter from Italy would join him in Detroit.

Carmine and Helen Campitelle

The Campitelle family left their farm in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania (about 50 miles outside of Philadelphia) for the employment opportunities of the Detroit automobile factories. Coming separately from Italy around the first decade of the century, Carmine and Helen Campitelle, both Italian immigrants, were to meet and marry in the United States.

Helen, born in 1894 in Naples and living in close proximity to the local Catholic Church, many times accompanied her deacon father to church. As she grew older, she began to investigate the teachings of the Lord that nurtured her desire to come to America, thus allowing her to

visit many faiths and religions. At 17 years of age, she was permitted by her father to go on this venture. She arrived in Tamaqua with no schooling but was able to obtain employment as a housekeeper in a boarding house. It would be during a serious illness, which required a tumor to be removed from her stomach, that she would receive her first religious experience where she saw the Lord dressed in an illuminated white robe as He circled her bedside. From then on, she knew she would be healed; yet the doctor instructed her to reside in a region where there would be a lot of water.

Carmine, born in 1891, came to America at age 14 and was able to learn the trade of welding, which yielded considerable money. This afforded Carmine, when he and Helen married, to purchase a small farm.

Now settled, and with four young children, disaster would follow wherein their farmhouse, along with most of their belongings, was destroyed by fire. In learning that the factories in Detroit were employing and in consideration of Helen's health, the move was made. Soon after Carmine obtained employment, they purchased a home and Helen began her search for God's True Church.

At Chrysler Corporation, where Carmine was employed, he met Brother Patsy DiBattista. There, they would discuss the "correctness" of their own beliefs, with eventually Carmine consenting to having the saints hold a meeting in his home. Brother Ishmael and Sister Julia D'Amico, Brother Ralph and Sister Anna Frammolino, with their daughter, Sister Louise, and Brother Patsy, met that first time in the Campitelles' home. In meeting the saints, their lives would forever change. Sister Mary Dichiera (Carmine and Helen's daughter) would later say:

They were very much impressed about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how the brothers and sisters treated them. They seemed to be overjoyed the following Sunday morning, they attended a meeting at Brother Frammolino's home.

My parents left us alone and only took the baby with them (there were six children at this time). My parents had never left us alone, and it was getting late and we were worried that something awful had happened to them.

We were all sitting in the living room and one of my sisters saw an angel who told her not to worry, because my parents would soon be home. About fifteen minutes later, they arrived home. It was a time of rejoicing and everyone was happy.

The following Sunday, the whole family went to church and, shortly after, both Carmine and Helen were baptized on April 2, 1922. Many experiences and blessings followed the family from that time on. Sister Helen was given the gift of tongues, which was used to the edification of the saints; in time she was ordained a deaconess. Brother Carmine was ordained an elder in 1927. Ultimately, to their ten children as well as countless others, they lived exemplary lives of honor and service to the Lord.

A Year of Terrible Persecutions

As the blessings of God increased, a seemingly equal portion of persecution followed. The family members, who initially confronted Sister Anna, began to confer with an Italian priest about Anna's conversion. Fearing the loss of many of his parishioners, the priest, through his ties to the Italian community, sought to "discourage" the Frammolinos from influencing their Italian friends.

The attacks began. A conspiracy was formed to kidnap Anna's daughter, Maria, as she walked home from school. Anna's neighbor, Antoinetta Visconti, who had received the testimony of the Gospel, but was not yet convinced of its credibility, caught word of this plan. Antoinetta reasoned that if the Lord would allow Maria to return safely home from school, she would then accept the truth of the Gospel. Antoinetta did, indeed, that afternoon see Maria return home safely and witnessed the conspirators angrily ask one another how this little girl was able to slip past them. Antoinetta eventually joined the Church.

Along with the Lord's impenetrable protection placed around the saints and their children, we find that ministering angels intervened on their behalf. Once a messenger appeared to Brother Ralph and instructed, "Tonight, after everyone in your family has gone to bed, turn all the

lights on and lock the house. You and your wife are to go up to Brother Ishmael's (room) because tonight will be another trial." In only a few minutes after obeying the instructions, two men, who were evidently gangsters, cut the screen door, entered the house and proceeded to physically attack Brother Ishmael. Upon seeing the women they stopped short of serious injury, yet still managed to mar Brother Ishmael's face before they left. Reflecting on what had happened, Brother Ishmael stated that this trial proved how great the work must be for the Gospel in Detroit.

In another incident, Sister Anna relates of a messenger appearing to her husband, saying:

Watch, because they are coming to put a bomb under your house to burn it; so you and your wife stay up and always keep the light on, so it will discourage them to do this.

For the next three nights, the lights were never turned off, with Brother and Sister Frammolino sharing the watch shifts. Then, again, the messenger appeared to Brother Ralph telling that the danger had passed. The saints were to find out later that for these three nights, six men had attempted to carry out this act but were stopped by a personage dressed in white.

Upon hearing of this incident, in a strange turn of events, the wife of the leader of this gang began to question this new and different church. She started to attend meetings, and, in due time, being convinced of the truth, was baptized. Her husband witnessed the baptism, and though still skeptical of the Church, he along with his wife began to occasionally visit the Frammolinos. On one particular evening, the husband, feigning good will toward the Frammolinos, visited along with his wife. When their stay pressed into night, Sister Anna began to pray that they would leave, for Brother Ralph needed to rise early the next morning for work. Suddenly, a spirit of courage took hold of Sister Anna; she encouraged her husband to retire to bed. The evening passed into the morning with Sister Anna expounding on spiritual matters. By the time Brother Ralph had arisen for work, the man began to weep. He asked Brother Ralph the

time Brother Ishmael rose for work and then flatly said that none of you will go to work today for I want to be baptized. He continued stating that, as Sister Anna had read from the Bible that evening, a personage appeared and revealed to him all of his sins and his need for baptism. Needless to say, this day would be cause for a great celebration among the saints!

For a while this man was steadfast in his conversion, yet the ties from his past came back to haunt him. He was taken captive by his former gang, and eventually fell away from the Church. His suspension from the Church greatly disturbed him to the extent that he appeared in Church one Sunday afternoon brandishing a handgun. His intent was to kill Brother Patsy DiBattista, feeling that it was he who was responsible for his suspension. Only Brother Antonio Molisani, the deacon that day who confronted the intruder, was aware of what was happening. Brother Antonio recalls, "... I told him to wait until the service was over and then he could shoot anybody he wanted to." In this state of fear, Brother Antonio, as well as the man, sat quietly as the service proceeded. Brother Antonio remembered, in humor, what transpired during sacrament.

I was scared to death because Brother Ishmael was walking towards me with the chalice of wine. Brother Ishmael did not know what was transpiring. As he handed me the chalice, I had one eye on Brother Ishmael and one eye on the gun, and without realizing it, I drank all the sacrament wine. . . . Brother Ishmael gave me a funny look and returned to put more wine into the chalice.

But, this troubled man did not fire the gun. What did transpire was miraculous! A very inspired Brother Patsy DiBattista began to speak a thunderous sermon that would shake the very core of his soul. Immediately following the meeting, he dropped the gun, embraced Brother Pat, and in a repentant spirit asked to be reinstated.

The Church complied with his request, and this former hit man would later be used to do the Lord's work. Within a week of his baptism, he and his family moved to Cleveland, secretly fleeing from his underworld past. The Lord now laid upon him the desire to bring the Gospel to his in-

laws in New Jersey. The opportunity availed itself when his young brother-in-law, Gabriel Mazzeo, came to Cleveland to visit his sister. Through this former gangster's testimony, the brother-in-law was introduced to the Gospel and during his extended stay was baptized by Brother Joseph Corrado. Upon his return home with Brother Corrado, this young man's parents, the Mazzeos, also accepted the Gospel and the Church was established in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

As if there was not enough persecution of the saints already, even law enforcement officers began to impose some restraining measures. On one occasion, two officers entered the home during a church meeting. Being told by neighbors, who despised the saints for leaving their former religion, that they were actually members of the Italian underworld, the police proceeded to search the premises for evidence. Coming up empty-handed, the police were satisfied that the accusations were not true. Nevertheless, at other times the police had come to the meetings demanding that, if the saints were to continue worshiping in the home, they would have to refrain from opening the windows and doors during the services so as not to disturb their neighbors. During a hot and humid summer, this would become a great inconvenience. Speaking of all the trials endured, Brother Ishmael would later refer to the year of 1922, stating:

That year was a year of terrible persecutions to the Church. The neighbors nearby reported that we were disturbing the peace and I cannot remember how many times the police came while we were in our meeting. The neighbors had even written up a petition to remove us from the neighborhood. (D'Amico, p. 20)

Finally, the day came when the saints were able to rent a little store-room located at Cadillac and Forest Streets to hold their meetings. Through it all, God's blessings prevailed and, by the end of 1922, the membership had grown to 22.

Brother Anthony Pietrangelo

As early as 1921, Anthony Pietrangelo had contact with The Church of Jesus Christ through his wife, Rosina. She had actually witnessed the

very first baptisms, though she had taken no part in the jeering. Although she remained a non-member, she began to attend regularly and even encouraged her husband to come. This was to no avail. After about a year, however, Anthony consented one evening to listen to the experiences of Brother Ishmael when he came to visit. Before leaving, he suggested that Anthony kneel down and pray to ask God whether the experiences that he related were true. Anthony writes:

It was the first time in my life that I got down on my knees in prayer to God before going to bed. I asked God to show me in some way if the experiences were true. I then got into bed but I could not sleep. In my room and before my eyes appeared a man all dressed in white. He stood at the foot of my bed and just looked at me. I tossed and turned, closing my eyes and hoping that this man would disappear. His presence remained in my room all night. This experience, however, did not bring me closer to God, although I began to attend the services with my wife occasionally. (*The Gospel News*, February 1969, p. 9)

In the meantime, Rosina had an experience, which verified the fact that she had to repent and be baptized. Being hesitant, however, she determined to wait until her husband asked for his baptism. She would seemingly wait in vain for Anthony, who desired first to enjoy life in his youth before making such a serious commitment.

July 26, 1923 started out like any other day. Anthony went to work with everything proceeding normally, but only until after the lunch break. That day he would receive a unique conversion. Anthony continues:

Suddenly, as I was walking, all of my strength left my body and perspiration broke out all over my body. I became so weak that I felt like I was going to fall on the floor from weakness. I cried out, "Oh God, what's wrong with me?"

At once I heard a voice like thunder saying, "Today is the day, if you want to obey me." I answered, "Lord, I will."

I told my foreman I had to go home and proceeded out of the plant. When I reached the plant gate, my strength returned to me completely. When this happened, I thought to myself, "Why should I go home, I feel fine now?"

As soon as this thought entered my mind, I felt a hand on my back pushing me and I heard a voice say, "Go, and don't turn back." I then continued on home.

Remarkably, while Anthony made his way home, the Spirit of God again gave the command to leave for home, this time to Brother Ishmael D'Amico, some fifteen miles away at his respective workplace. But, after hearing the command to leave, Brother Ishmael resisted, thinking that he was obligated to work to the end of the workday, causing the Spirit to utilize the same method of persuasion as before. Immediately, Brother Ishmael became too ill to work and was forced to return home to lie in bed.

Once Anthony arrived home, he was again directed, this time to the home of Brother Ishmael. Thinking that Brother Ishmael was at work, he was surprised to see him home in bed. He then requested baptism. Both men then exchanged their stories of striking similarity. The illness left Brother Ishmael, and that day, both Anthony and his wife, Rosina, were baptized.

Brother Ishmael had learned a lesson that day. The Spirit of God would speak to him regarding those baptisms:

This is your work. While this brother (Anthony) was at work, he had heard a voice saying to him, "Today is the day you can obey My command. Go home so My servant can baptize you." (D'Amico, pp. 21-22; *The Gospel News*, February 1969, p. 9)

Brother Matthew Miller

It was in one of the Detroit factories in the summer of 1923 where Brother Carmine Campitelle gave his testimony telling of The Church of Jesus Christ to a co-worker, Matthew Miller. This led to a period of soul searching as best told by Brother Miller himself:

I was born in Jamaica, British West Indies, August 17, 1893. My parents, members of the Episcopal Church, brought me up in my youth to the best of their knowledge, with a keen interest in the things of God. I attended Sunday School and in time became a Sunday School teacher

and superintendent. I was now a member of the church, and became a licensed lay reader and catechist of the church. My parents greatly desired me to become a minister, but I chose to be one who would preach the Gospel for free.

I left Jamaica in 1919, and spent a year in Cuba, arriving in this country in 1920. I then entered school in Tuskegee, Alabama, in the Theological Department, finishing a seven-year course in three years and graduating in 1923, in academics, industry and Bible training. I was accepted in Bishop Payne's Divinity School in Petersburg, Virginia, to study for my Ph.D. degree, but at that time, being in Detroit and disgusted with the approach all the churches made to the matter of serving God, I declined to take this further course and was at a loss to know just what to do.

At this time, I was invited to The Church of Jesus Christ, where I was really alarmed to find the Gospel being preached in purity. I made it a matter of prayer, asking God whether or not this was really His Church. If so, would He kindly forgive me of my many sins and make me one of His children.

After continuous prayer to God for a period of three weeks, one night while in my room which had begun to darken, while in deep meditation, I saw a glorious light spring in; it continued to radiate the room until suddenly the whole room was lit up, and it was brighter than I am able to express. A great joy unspeakable fell in my soul, and it appeared that just as when this light struck my room it emitted the darkness, so also my sins seemingly had disappeared and I felt as though I were an angel of God. I knelt down and gave God praise that He had heard my prayer, and that night I had a dream that I was riding across a river and had something real heavy in my hand, which had fallen in the water. I went to pick it up and became wet all over. Although I had said heretofore that I would not be baptized if I were paid a thousand dollars, when the true light of God had reached my soul, I would pay everything I possessed for the same. I was baptized October 28, 1923 by Brother Pasquale DiBattista. Glory be to God, all His gifts and blessings cost nothing but a consecrated and regenerated heart. Being in The Church of Jesus Christ now, I fully resolved to serve God faithfully, asking Him constantly that if at any time He should see that I would be minded to return to dumb elements of the world and be unfaithful, that He would take my life away while my heart is pure. After about nine months in the Church, I was called by the Holy Spirit to be an elder in 1924. I have had great pleasure in preaching the Gospel and hearing it

preached by my brethren, some of whom were cradled in the Church. I have been greatly blessed in administering baptism and in the other ordinances of The Church.

Referring to the work amongst the American Indians on the Muncey Mission:

Throughout the whole Church this was a realization of a hope long cherished, seeing the remnant of the House of Israel beginning to come to a knowledge of the covenants of God enjoyed by their forefathers and held in store for them when they make themselves worthy of same. This work was turned over by the General Church to Branch No. I in Detroit. Different brothers at intervals took turn in administering the Gospel to our Indian Brethren, there being much opposition from the devil and his host. I was much overjoyed to join my fellow brethren in this work.

I was called to be an evangelist in 1937, having had an evidence of this when a boy; for when quite young I told many of my seniors that I hoped the day would come when I would be sent out as Christ sent out His apostles and evangelists to preach the Gospel, the realization of which is a continual source of great joy and inspiration to me.

I was married in 1939 to Miss Eva Muriel Atkins of Red Oak, Virginia, a member of the Baptist church. She has since been baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ. We look forward to much progress in the Church, realizing that there must be self-denial and sacrifice if this work is to reach its ultimate goal. We hope to be faithful to the end and if the Lord should bless us with a family, see them grow up to be faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Matthew served as assistant secretary in the conferences for many years. He performed the duties of the ministry faithfully and labored diligently among the Seed of Joseph on two of the Indian Reservations of Canada. An inspired writer, he became the editor for Branch No. I and wrote articles in *The Gospel News* every month for years.

Brother Silverio Criscuolo

Rooming as one of the boarders in the Campitelle home for about five years, Brother Matthew shared his quarters with two young Italian

men, Domenick and Silverio, and their father, Valentine Criscuolo, for part of that time. Providing only two beds for the four of them, the men were fortunate to be working varying factory shifts allowing them to have the beds to themselves except on the weekends when their schedules coincided. Not long after Silverio's arrival from Italy he was introduced to the Gospel. Brother Matthew recalls:

I became quite interested in the young man and endeavored to impart unto him the English language. He was quite apt and learned readily. I soon could teach him the principles of the Gospel also, of which he became quite interested and would attend services with us regularly.

I have a vivid recollection of one afternoon when we were on our way to prayer service; I asked him did he think he would ever obey the Gospel. His chest out and speaking very boldly, he told me, maybe he would obey it in the next ten or fifteen years. I, however, had an experience that very night (dream) of preaching the Gospel and seeing one in the congregation ready for baptism. And after the service was over, there appeared one as the Son of God dressed in pure white linen. He, the candidate, and I were transported through the air to the river shore and the next thing, He [the Son of God] was teaching me how to baptize. That next Sunday morning [November 28, 1926] Brother Ishmael D'Amico asked the brethren who felt to introduce the morning service. I volunteered. A brother sitting beside me asked was I sure I was right in going ahead with the meeting. I told him that the Lord had revealed some wonderful things to me and I wanted to prove Him. . . . I opened the service and received quite a blessing in speaking. When I was through, Brother Silverio rose to his feet and asked the congregation to sing Hymn #52 in Italian. After this hymn was sung, he got up again and asked to be baptized. I had the honor of officiating in this case. . . . (this being the first person Brother Matthew Miller baptized) (*The Gospel News*, September 1945, p. 2)

The Lord's Instruction

A God of miracles may choose miraculous means to instruct His people. Such was the case with Brother Miller. Brother Matthew relates:

While I was young in the Church, one of my best advisors was Brother Raphael [Ralph] Frammolino. I would counsel with him as if

he had been my own father. Should I see any brothers or sisters disagreeing, I would tell him to see if he could not help them to fix up their grievances. I remember one Sunday seeing some contention, but Brother Frammolino was not around [for counsel]. I thought about this through the night and next morning on my way to work, no sooner had my feet struck the sidewalk, than Brother Frammolino was accompanying me, and walked with me all the way to work, listening attentively at the tale I had to tell. When we arrived at the gate of the plant, he asked me this question, "Did you do your duty?" meaning did I pray for the brothers and sisters that the good Lord would give them strength to overcome their ills.

I replied truthfully, "No," and was about to say goodbye, as I went in to work. To my dismay and astonishment there was no Brother Frammolino to shake hands with. I was only associating with the good spirit, who had taught me a lesson never to be forgotten and had vanished. I stood there almost bewildered for a moment, then went to work putting into effect the advice I had received. When I saw the brothers and sisters, all their troubles had ended, and I found out later that while Brother Frammolino was in Detroit walking and talking with me, in reality, he had been in Toledo, Ohio, visiting a brother and sister who were living there at the time. (*The Gospel News*, February 1946, p. 7-8)

"My Father"

By Brother Carl Frammolino:

My parents received many experiences. Visions and dreams seemed to be given to them readily. My father [Brother Ralph] also had occasions when he saw the Three Nephites, of whom he bore evidence in Church services.

He was an ordained teacher of the Church, and he served as the presiding teacher for many years. I marveled at how he labored in working with his fellow teachers for the good of the membership. Ordained teachers seemed to have their greatest impact during those days. My father was constantly in search of God's direction, and he was guided on many occasions to visit certain people at what appeared to be the most needful times. Actually, the entire team of teachers appeared to be in harmony and working together unquestioningly about the sacrifices they had to make in visiting and encouraging the brothers and sisters.

Hall and Devine Building

Brother Ishmael D'Amico writes:

In the month of August 1924, we began to build a regular church building. . . . I was entrusted with seeing that a lot and building materials were bought. I had to quit my job at Fords for six months. Since there were few men in the Church, the work could not be done very fast. I can truly say that God did much to help us build the church. There were times when we did not know how to do certain jobs and the Lord would reveal it to us. For instance, we had difficulty putting in the windows . . . the hinges . . . were of a strange type to us. We finally had to give up in despair. I felt discouraged and so I decided to go to God in prayer to show us how to put these things on the windows. I went into another room and I earnestly implored God's help. When I was through praying, I looked up and saw a white arm with a hinge in its hand. It demonstrated several times how the hinges should be placed. It then disappeared. I returned to the brethren and showed them how to put the hinges on the windows and as the arm had demonstrated, likewise did we, and we had no difficulty. This experience proved to us that no matter what kind of trouble we are having, God is always there to help us, if we but take the time to call upon Him.

It was a blessing to know that God was with us in the building of our church. (D'Amico, pp. 23-24)

Brother Molisani adds:

None of us were financially comfortable. In fact, most were either on welfare or out of work and we all had big families, but somehow the money came in as we were building our church. When it was time to buy the windows, each member had to kick in \$10. I was out of work and one day when I was walking home from Brother Ishmael's home, I had to pass the church building. I raised my eyes toward heaven and talked to God and told him that I didn't know when I would be able to give the Church my \$10 share for the windows. No sooner I said that, I looked on the ground and there was \$10. I immediately looked up and thanked God. He had provided.

Brother Ishmael continues:

In December, this building was finished and we had our first meeting on December 28th, 1924. We started to church that day from our homes and we all walked in line. There were about 43 of us. We walked into the church and formed a large circle, with an elder in each corner and one on the pulpit. Each elder offered prayer and it was a wonderful day for all of us. This church was called the Devine Branch, because it was located at Devine and Hall Streets." (D'Amico, p. 24)

As the Saints made their pilgrimage to their new location that dedication day, all voices rang out singing, "We're Marching to Zion." At the October Conference, mention was made of the saints in Detroit having erected a building; the General Church would allocate some money for attorney fees. (Cadman History, pp. I58, I62)

Over the years, this small building would be used, allowing the name of the Lord to be greatly magnified time and time again. In reflection, just the words, "Hall and Devine" seem to characterize the tenor of that day. With these saints pioneering the way, the mission would become the hub of a flurry of varied spiritual works. It was within these walls that thunderous sermons inspired the common to do the uncommon, the seemingly impossible made possible, and where the simple refrains of the old Italian hymns could move whole congregations to tears. Here, broken lives were mended, burdens lifted, the afflicted were healed and God's hand was moved. One could only wonder how the very walls themselves could withstand the spirit contained within. As one newcomer had stated:

As I entered the Devine Street Church for the first time, such a strong feeling came over me. I silently prayed, "I do not know anything about this Church, but God, I want to serve you." A voice replied within me, "If you want to serve Me, this is the place." (This newcomer, Sister Grace Francione would be baptized on August 18, 1929.) (*The Gospel News*, October 1979, p. 1)

The Detroit Mission, now firmly established, began to attract members transferring from Branches in Ohio and Pennsylvania to where employment could also be readily obtained in the city's factories.

Apostle Thurman Furnier

In the fall of 1926, Apostle Thurman Furnier, his wife, Sister Birdie, and family moved to Detroit in search of employment. Aside from his temporal employment in Detroit, Brother Thurman would engage in a far greater spiritual work as he provided key leadership during much of its early rapid growth. Coming from a mining town, Sunshine, Pennsylvania, Brother Thurman became another laid-off victim of the Coal Miners' Strike of 1922-23. It was near Sunshine, at Martin, where the April General Church Conference of 1917 authorized the Martin Mission to be established with Brother Furnier in charge. A thriving branch would later result; but, because many of the members were dependent upon the mines for their livelihood, the spiritual work ceased there when many of the members sought employment elsewhere.

DETROIT, BRANCH #1

By 1927, the Detroit Mission had grown to about 80 members. On July 16, 1927, the General Church gave its permission to the Detroit Mission to become a branch and appointed Brother Thurman S. Furnier as the General Church officer to supervise this work. Brother Ishmael D'Amico was elected as the first presiding elder, with Brothers Pasquale DiBattista and Matthew Miller as first and second counselors, respectively.

Good Seed Falls on Fertile Soil: The Impastatos and Randazzos

Each new member would have their own unique revelation to the Truth of the Restored Gospel and to the recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. These callings were usually accompanied by strong manifestations of the Holy Spirit, leading to experiences, visions, healings, and dreams that would serve as a foundation for a lifetime of dedicated service to the Lord.

In the early part of January 1933, the young child of Sam and Rose Impastato, Ned, had fallen backward from the kitchen into the basement,

striking his head on the cement floor. Seeing her child unconscious, Rose found she could not revive him and, with the hour being past midnight and her husband working on the midnight shift, she did not know what to do. The only person Rose knew who had a telephone was her friend, Mary Castelli. Rose phoned and asked Mrs. Castelli whether she knew a doctor. Mrs. Castelli did not recommend seeing a doctor, but excitedly responded that she and her husband had been attending a church "where they pray for all manner of sickness . . . (and) perform miracles." She added, "We can go and get the minister. He will come and pray for your son and I am sure he will revive." Rose was assured that the minister would come even at this late hour of the night.

Joseph and Mary Castelli, along with Brother Joseph Giansante, by now an elder of the Church, arrived soon thereafter. Upon anointing, the young lad immediately regained consciousness just about the time Mr. Impastato arrived home from work. The following Sunday, Rose went to the Detroit Branch, and word of Ned's healing spread throughout the local community.

One neighbor, Mrs. Randazzo, lost no time in visiting the Impastatos, finding Ned playing in the backyard and showing no ill effect. Mrs. Randazzo's son, Mark Randy, remembers, "As my mother talked to Rose, my eyes witnessed a Bible on a table for the first time in my life." Asking if he could read the Bible, Rose became very nervous, stating that she had gone to another church not of the Catholic religion. Mark Randy recalls:

In those days, there was a great divide between Catholics and Protestants, but my mother, who had been exposed to many needs and much death, learned that God is a Father to all mankind.

So, in response to Mrs. Impastato, Mrs. Randazzo stated, "We are God's children. We have one Father, He loves us. When are you going back to that church?" Brother Mark continues:

Sunday came along and there was a tense feeling inside me. Rose Impastato had attended only one previous meeting and wasn't sure how

to guide me there, but we finally found it. An Italian preacher (Brother Ishmael D'Amico), was on his feet talking about a fantastic story. He was telling a historical happening during the organization of the first mission in Detroit.

This account was of the time when the Lord miraculously sent a messenger to guide Ishmael, Sister Anna, and her daughter to the Cleveland saints for Sister Anna's ordination.

Brother Mark Randy continues with the conversion of his sister:

I watched those sitting near me. They had tears in their eyes, and on turning to see, my own sister, Virginia, had tears in her eyes. I poked her with my elbow and softly said, "What is the matter with you? Why do you cry? The man is a phony; forgets the address, so prays for God to do for him what he should or could have done for himself." It just did not make sense to me, but it did to everybody else. What kind of people are these? They seem sincere, but fanatical. God does not work that way, I thought. I just could not convince Virginia. She was the most devout in our family.

On our next trip, father came along. He became interested also, but I lost more interest with each visit. The meetings were orderly, the people courteous and very kind, but I just didn't care. What could I do now? My father became more and more attached, and Virginia also.

My mother sided with me. However, one day Virginia reported, "I am going to be baptized." Mom became upset, such as I had not seen her before. . . . Virginia, however, remained calm and that next Sunday, Virginia was the first to lead our whole family to Christ the Lord. Though Rose Impastato was the one who brought the good news to us, she did not get baptized until after Virginia, my father, mother, and I.

It was on March 5, 1933 that Sister Virginia Randazzo was baptized by Brother Matthew Miller and confirmed by Brother Joseph Giansante. Her testimony would be of meeting "a group of people so humble," and upon seeing a vision of Christ walking down the aisle with many people following, she was convinced of the Truth of the Gospel.

Virginia's two sisters, Mary and Sarah, would soon follow her into baptism. Unbeknownst to the three young women was the plan that the Lord had laid out for them. Remarkably, each would marry men who

would be used mightily in the Lord's work. On April 23, 1933, Mark Randy was baptized by Brother Matthew Miller.

More Fertile Soil: The Lombardos and Loalvos

Had it not been for the illness of young Joe Lombardo, the Lombardo and Loalvo families may never have been introduced to the Gospel. The relationship between the fathers, Leonardo Loalvo and Antonio Lombardo, began in their homeland of Italy. Various circumstances would separate the two families, yet, unbeknown to the other, each family, in time, would immigrate to the United States, only to find that they had moved within a half dozen or so houses of each other on Cooper Street in Detroit. The relationship had now been renewed at about the time when Antonio and Louise's son, Joe, took seriously ill at a young age.

As was the custom among many Catholic Italians, Leonardo suggested that the Lombardos bring their son to a "healer"—one whose cures, based on peculiar practices and beliefs, had been handed down through the generations. Antonio, Louise, and Joe were directed to the home of the "healer," Felix Buccellato, and, upon their arrival, met with an unexpected response. Felix no longer practiced this healing, but told them of new beliefs he had encountered, of his baptism into The Church of Jesus Christ, which had shown evidence of the healing power of God. Louise's heart was touched, but Felix warned that she must go to this church with the intention of personal salvation, and, perhaps, God might see fit to heal her son. Soon thereafter, sometime in the spring of 1933, she found herself in attendance at the Sunday service held at Devine and Hall Streets.

That Sunday, she was taken aback by the love and humility shown her by the saints, as well as the simplicity of the message preached by the ministry. Never before had such a feeling of well being come over her. She could hardly wait to share this feeling with her family and the Loalvos. Immediately, she proceeded to the Loalvo household. Finding the three younger Loalvo boys, she began to bear her testimony to the wonderful experience of this new church. Of those who listened, it was Joseph, the oldest of the three brothers, who decided to investigate Louise's claim.

Therefore, the following Sunday in May, Joe Loalvo, along with Louise's older son, Nicholas, ventured into the building on Devine and Hall Streets. Brother Joe relates:

... for the first time in the twenty-three years of my life, I heard the true and unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ. Under the sound of Brother Patsy DiBattista's voice, an evangelist in the Church, I felt a conviction deep in my heart that I was a sinner and had to give an account of my deeds to God. I felt a joy in my heart amongst this people, and at the close of the meeting, I returned home and declared to my family that I had found the true people of God. (*The Gospel News*, September 1952, p. 2)

Brother V. James Loalvo adds:

After the service was over, he came back in a hurry, and finding me in the garage repairing our car, ... he spoke with tears in his eyes, "Jim, at last I have found the true Church. At last I have found a people who love and serve God." He spoke with such enthusiasm and forcefulness that my heart began to yearn to visit the Church and see for myself.

On the following Wednesday night, I left home to go to the meeting and on my way there, I thought I would see a beautiful structure, but to my amazement, I saw, when I reached the Church, a simple frame building, and entering inside I saw the simplicity of honest religion all around me. I sat down and heard for the first time in my life the Restored Gospel preached. (Cadman History, p. 327)

Excitement was generated; the brothers soon attracted the attention of others.

Brother Mark Randy remembers:

Late June 1933, I noticed two young men enter Church. I lost no time in getting their names and addresses. The following Monday night, I was at the house of Joseph Loalvo. There I met Jim, Tony and their parents, Leonardo and Rose Loalvo. I told them about Jesus and His redeeming grace. I asked permission if they would let me pray. I said, "Lord, break the chains that bind them."

With the saints now fasting and praying on behalf of the Loalvo family, revelations would follow. In a dream given to Rose Loalvo, the Lord brought her back to the time her husband had been struck by lightning. He simply stated, "I healed your husband because the three men that came forth out of your womb are to be My servants." Joseph, James, and Anthony would now fulfill this prophecy.

In a dream received from the Lord, Joseph found himself on a narrow road leading up a hill to a building made of precious jewels. As Joseph started up the hill towards the building, he was faced with a compelling opposition in the form of two hands holding him back. Bleeding and tired, he finally made it to the top where he then could see the name, "The Church of Jesus Christ" across the top of the building. There a voice spoke to him stating, "Joseph, if you want to serve Me, now is your opportunity." (*The Gospel News*, February 1985, p. 8)

"That Day Will Always Be the Sweetest Day of My Life"

Brother Joe related:

The weight of sin continued to burden my heart and I went to God in prayer, earnestly beseeching forgiveness of my sins. I sought Him in this manner for several weeks, during which time I attended all services in the Church, visited the saints in their homes, listened to their testimonies and accepted the Restored Gospel without any doubt whatsoever.

After witnessing two baptisms on the morning of July 9, 1933, I returned home feeling as an outcast. The burden of sin still lay heavy on my heart, and though I prayed unceasingly, I knew that my sins had not yet been forgiven. I entered my bedroom and falling on my knees I implored God to forgive my sins, declaring that I was willing to forsake the sinful pleasures of this world and consecrate my life to His service. After several minutes, I felt, as it were, a fire envelop my whole being and the sadness in my heart turned to joy. The burden of sin was removed and I felt the presence of the Mighty God. I was ready to follow Christ into the waters of baptism. The following Sunday, July 16, 1933, I was baptized into the Church along with my brother James and my brother Anthony. That day will always be the sweetest day in my life, and I shall never forget the joy and the happiness that I experienced when through the mercies of God I was drawn out of a wicked and sinful world and

brought into His glorious Church here below. (*The Gospel News*, September 1952, p. 2)

Along with Brother Mark, how strongly these young, vibrant men were attracted to the Church; how quickly they were to absorb the Faith; how apt they were to be given responsibilities. Brother Mark Randy remembers:

By the end of 1933, several young men and women were baptized. We asked Thurman Furnier, our presiding elder, for permission to organize a young men's organization. It was granted. Joseph (Lovalvo) was chosen president, V. James (Lovalvo), teacher, and I, the treasurer.

[The youth] organization became so successful, that at times, even older men would join us. Frank Palermo, an elder, who was once a Catholic priest, needed eyeglasses. Though poor, we bought him glasses. Apostle John Ward had no teeth. Joseph, James and I went to the dentist, and related our wishes to him. He volunteered to make false teeth at his cost. We, in turn pledged \$2.00 each month, until it was fully paid.

Though inexperienced young men, we were most organized. The studies included homework and searching the scriptures to find questions of the week. Some had divine dreams helping to find their questions of the week.

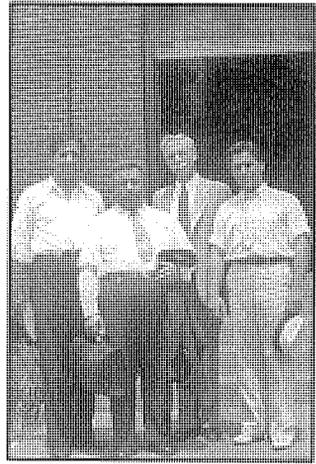
Brother Jim adds:

I gave the young brothers a passage of scripture to find which is recorded in The Book of Mormon, but I cautioned them not to use concordances, nor ask anyone for help; they were to search for this scripture, searching only in The Book of Mormon. The verse was, "And little children also have eternal life."

On the following Thursday evening (the night we usually held our class), I asked whether anyone had found the verse of scripture. To my dismay, no one had found it. At once, Brother Concetto Alessandro raised his hand and said that he had found the verse but wanted to tell us how he had found it. "By Tuesday," he said, "I still had not found the verse; therefore, I fasted and prayed all day on Wednesday, asking the Lord to help me find the verse. After I retired on Wednesday evening, I had a dream in which I saw myself sitting at a desk perusing The Book of Mormon. Suddenly, a personage appeared and asked me what I was

doing. I told him that we had been given a verse to find in The Book of Mormon and was not able to locate it. I told him, also, that it would be a shame if no one was able to find the verse in question. The personage smiled at me and said, 'Look in Mosiah 15:25 and you will find it.' I awoke with a start, and I immediately awakened my wife and told her what the personage had said. We both arose from the bed, and opening The Book of Mormon to Mosiah 15:25, we found the verse I was searching for."

In time, Brother Joe married Sister Virginia Randazzo; Brother Jim married Virginia's sister, Mary. Within ten years of the brothers' baptisms, they were ordained apostles and both sisters as deaconesses. As if the Lord desired to overtly verify His blessings upon the Randazzo family, the youngest sister, Sarah, also married a young man who would be greatly used by the Lord and eventually hold the office of apostle, Brother Robert A. Watson. She, herself, in due time, was also ordained a deaconess.



V. James Lovalvo, Ishmael D'Amico,
William Cadman and Joseph Lovalvo

God's magnificent blessings extended upon the other Lovalvo and Randazzo siblings as well. Brothers Mark Randy and Anthony Lovalvo would be used extensively in many works for the Lord as untiring evangelists.

A Miracle

Carl J. Frammolino was born the last of six children of Brother Ralph and Sister Anna Frammolino in 1930. Brother Carl states:

My childhood, as today, revolved around the Church. My best friends were children of other church members, so we were obviously of the same background and rearing. The people were strict but their love was sincere and heartfelt. Though most of them had come from Europe . . . they quickly identified with this land and the beauty of the

Gospel of Jesus Christ, which actually became their lives. Aside from wage-earner and home responsibilities, their activity, preoccupation, and pursuits were keyed to The Church of Jesus Christ—Her beliefs, Her love, Her hope, Her trust, Her promises. . . .

How the Lord worked in their lives daily was reported enthusiastically among themselves, whether they were testifying in a church service or visiting in each other's homes. Few people had telephones, so they would travel to each other's homes, checking on their well-being, helping each other in times of illness, praying for each other as needed, relating experiences, and, in general, exhibiting their love in spiritual and humanitarian ways.

Living on a very busy street, it was just in front of the Frammolino house where an automobile struck little four- and-a-half-year-old Carl as he tried to cross. Carl was run over, leaving his right leg with a severe compound fracture. The prognosis was discouraging: Carl would not walk again; and if he would be able to ambulate at all, it would be with a severe limp. Brother Carl continues:

I can remember how the brothers and sisters began to visit us—to spread cheer and hope, and yes, to fast and pray for my complete recovery, which would have to represent a miracle considering the damage that had been done.

Following Carl's return to his home, his parents acquired a tricycle to provide a therapeutic means for strengthening the leg, where little Carl was allowed countless hours of enjoyment pedaling about the house. Within a few months, he was granted a miraculous, complete recovery. Brother Carl:

Years later when I was inducted into the Army, I was adjudged to be in good health and was assigned to the infantry for training where marching daily resulted in no impediment or damage.

Trials from Within

Whether it is an individual struggling with the inner forces of his being or an internal conflict that easily erodes the strength of a united

body of believers, the most difficult trial to withstand is the one that comes from within. Such was the case with the saints in the year of 1936.

It was a time when it was customary to have a morning and afternoon meeting on Sundays—the first being led in the English language by the presiding elder, Brother Thurman Furnier, and the second, after lunch, conducted in the Italian language with our Italian brothers of the ministry taking the lead. Since Brother Furnier did not speak or understand the Italian language, he often used those Sunday afternoons to visit the fledgling Church work over in Windsor, Canada, visit the sick, or simply stay at home. Brother Tony Scolaro witnessed what transpired on Sunday, February 23, 1936:

During a Sunday afternoon fellowship service, an elder was preaching in the Italian language, and expressed his disbelief in the divine authenticity of The Book of Mormon, stating that it was not translated by the gift and power of God, but that it was written by man and was nothing more than a mere historical record. Needless to say, many of the brothers and sisters were upset to the point that they got up and left the meeting in protest.

While all this was going on, Brother Furnier, who happened to be home on this particular Sunday afternoon, was directed by the Spirit of God to go to Church because of the confusion being created by this false teaching.

When Brother Furnier arrived back at the Branch, the elder who was preaching in Italian, was still preaching. Brother Furnier boldly told him that he knew that he was preaching against The Book of Mormon and ordered him to sit down.

At a special branch meeting the following week, the elder flatly admitted to such statements against the authenticity of The Book of Mormon and continued in his stand. Consequently, he and eight members were suspended from the Church as a result of their disbelief in The Book of Mormon.

On the Grow

Brother Ishmael D'Amico was active in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The resulting new works were initially placed under the Detroit

branch's jurisdiction. Records show rapid growth, noting that on December 31, 1932, the membership of the Detroit Branch was 194; the Rochester or Rockwood Mission was 22; the Sopris, Colorado Mission was 18; and the Westside Mission was 34.

By April 10, 1937, branch minutes show that a recent conference placed the work in St. John and Wichita, Kansas under the jurisdiction of Detroit, Branch #1 (the Detroit Branch); also Sopris, Colorado; North Side Mission; Windsor and Muncey, Ontario, Canada. Eight members were listed at that time in the St. John Mission.

With the organization of the West Side, East Side, and North Side missions (all residing in Detroit and all stemming from the Detroit Branch) into branches by 1938, the Detroit Branch would be known as Branch #1. Similarly, the others would be known respectively as Branch #2, with Brothers D'Amico and Dulisse in charge; Branch #3, starting on the east side of Detroit, the same side as Branch #1, but some miles closer to the heart of the city, under the direction of Brother Patsy DiBattista; thereafter, Branch #4 was begun on the north side of Detroit, with Brothers V. James Lovalvo and Gorie Ciaravino placed in charge. When the Church expanded across the Detroit River into Windsor, Ontario, Canada, Brother Joseph Lovalvo was placed over that flock.

By 1937, the membership of the Church in the Detroit-Windsor area would flourish to over 400 members; by 1942 this number would swell to over 500. The 1930's would prove to be the Church's greatest era of growth in this area.

Brother Carl Frammolino:

There were baptisms on many Sundays, which meant going to the Detroit River some miles away—sometimes after the morning service, with a return to the afternoon service for confirmation. If performed after the afternoon service, a return to the building was required for the confirmation, which occasionally went into the night. On some occasions, several round-trips were required to baptize those who had called for their baptism in the morning and for those who had declared their intentions in the afternoon service. But these were happy times. New souls were coming into the Gospel at not-since-equalled rates. Members

would tell their relatives and friends about the Church and invite them to the meetings. The visitors would then be counseled to pray to God, as is directed in Moroni 10:3,4, to find out whether what they were being told was true. If so, they were to ask God for an experience of direction about what they should do. Invariably, they would soon be baptized and join the happy, joyous group which banded together to do God's will.

Like many others, we never had an automobile in our home during my childhood; thus, it was gratifying and appreciated when a brother would transport us to and from home to make certain those who wanted to attend could do so and be brought home, as well. This was particularly true in cold, wintry weather. Otherwise, it would be necessary to walk or take public transportation whenever possible. At this time, transportation is seemingly not a concern; but in those days, it was a luxury. The drivers considered their services an honor to perform, and I can recall their saying, "Now, you wait for me, and I'll pick you up for the next meeting about the same time." Everyone brought their lunches to church on Sunday, and we always ate together in the basement between meetings.

Records taken from the March 22, 1937 Branch minutes note the Branch support for the Indian missions, showing that a motion was passed by the Branch to charter a 40 to 60 passenger bus to bring the Muncey Indian brothers and sisters to conference and ask the General Church to defray the expense [approximately \$57].

And further, the Branch minutes of January 7, 1943 tell of a special meeting held to consider the transportation situation for servicing the Six Nations Indian Mission. In the discussion and suggestions which followed, because of gasoline rationing, it was agreed by the elders to have auxiliary gasoline tanks put on cars so as to have sufficient gasoline to make the trips to the Six Nations Reserve and back home. Brother Carl Frammolino:

Of course, the opening of Native American missions in Muncey and Six Nations Reserves in Ontario was well heralded, and the branches sought ways to make sure elders could get to these locations. Many times when necessary, brothers would volunteer on a Wednesday evening to drive an elder or elders of the mission the following Sunday, or even on Saturday if required.

Reports would be given verbally at each branch about the progress at the other locations, as they all seemed to continue to grow with more souls coming into the Gospel. It seemed like everyone had the missionary feeling and they wanted the Church to expand. It was like electricity, as the Spirit was being felt in the good works and increases that God brought about.

Sister Marietta Ruzzi

The dedicated saints of an earlier day built a foundation which succeeding works would stand upon and marked a standard which future generations would look toward. Sister Marietta Ruzzi embodied the finest of these qualities.

Born on April 7, 1885 to a well-to-do and privileged family in Northern Italy, she had two uncles who were Cardinals in the Catholic Church and was accustomed to associating with others in her class. Her husband was a businessman and they often traveled throughout Europe, owning properties in Italy. She spoke of herself as always dressing according to the high fashion and taste of those she associated with.

Marietta became the mother of five children, and in due time, her husband's business brought the family to the United States. Yet, through an incredible string of misfortune, her husband and five children each died in rapid succession. Thus, in the year of 1925, she found herself left in great distress, living alone in Youngstown, Ohio.

Marietta's suffering, though, did not go undetected. Two of her previous housekeepers, whom her husband and she had hired in better days, were saints of the Church, upon whom the Lord moved to visit her. Brother Alex Robinson, of the St. John, Kansas Mission, who spent considerable time listening to her testimony, recalls:

Sister Ruzzi said, "They came to visit me and as they came into the door, there was a bowl of holy water in the vestibule. Their first words were that you don't need that any more, you can throw that out." They began to tell her about the Church [but she was not interested at the time].

She said, "I thought that, if perhaps I would prepare a little coffee for them along with some refreshment, they would then eat and leave."

This she did. But while they sat at the table ready to partake, one of them asked permission to offer a prayer over the food. Sister Ruzzi said, "I responded in the affirmative."

He then proceeded to pray: "Lord, we have told her about this Church but she doesn't believe anything that we have told her. You show her." This rather abrupt prayer, along with thanksgiving for the refreshments, was somewhat a shock to Sister Ruzzi.

The Lord would confirm the words of these sisters that very night. Marietta was given a dream in which she saw two personages, one, a man dressed in white, and a boy. Although she didn't initially recognize the boy as her son, the boy spoke saying, "Mother, if you want to come where I am, you must believe what the sisters told you today." Immediately, she rushed forward to embrace him but was unable to. She then realized that the person who was with him was Jesus Christ.

The next morning she went to Detroit. Brother Alex Robinson:

Marietta said, "As we came to the small church at the corner of Devine and Hall Streets in Detroit, I thought to myself, this is no church, this is just a chicken coop." But she continued on and went into the service, seating herself in a position near the front where she could hear everything that was going on.

She said that Brother D'Amico came out to preach and he was wearing tan work trousers and a short sleeve blue denim shirt, the customary manner of dress for a workingman. She said, "I thought to myself, as soon as this is over, I'm going to leave and get as far away as I can." However, as he began to preach, she began to be moved upon by the Spirit of God, and by the end of the sermon, she was still hungering to hear more.

After the morning service was over, Brother D'Amico approached and said, "When you first came in, you didn't like what you saw, did you? But afterward you did."

Rather than leave Detroit, as she had purposed that day, she remained. But instead of truly opening her heart to the healing words of encouragement of Brother Ishmael and the other saints, she chose to remain with what she was familiar with—the pain of her losses. Loneliness and grief had followed her to Detroit, causing her many times to reflect upon her sadness.

One evening, the Lord spoke to her again. Marietta saw herself, in a dream, walking along a path with a black sheep walking in front of her. After a long walk, they both reached a river where a man gave her a bar of soap and instructed that, if she would wash her hands, the sheep would turn white as snow. And so it was, her hands were washed and the sheep turned white. When she awoke, there was no question as to who the black sheep was. All doubt concerning the authority of the Church had been removed.

Marietta was baptized on February 21, 1926 by Brother Angelantonio (Anthony) Ruzzi, a man whom she would later marry.

Upon baptism into the Church, Marietta determined that none of her former life would serve as a future hindrance. She flatly gave away all of her possessions, her lands, everything to those who were poor. She, herself, accepted the support of a husband who was a laboring man. Yet, for all that she gave away, she would be richly and generously adorned by the spiritual gifts, blessings and good favor laid before her by the Lord.

Brother Alex Robinson said of Sister Marietta:

Her home was a point of convergence for many of the saints, both young and old. Many requested her advice, sought her counsel on matters or brought their problems to her doorstep. Often, the Lord revealed to her needs which families had and directed her to go to their home and assist them. During the depression, if there was much hardship and poverty among the saints, often the Lord would tell her of some necessity that existed in a family in which the wife was about to give birth or where the children were suffering and in need.

While Brother Furnier and some of the saints were on missionary work in northern Michigan, they came across a family in which the mother had passed away and the father was an alcoholic. They brought word back of two young children living in a squalid condition with a father who was unable to provide for them. Word of this would reach Sister Marietta.

The Ruzzis hearts were moved with compassion and opened up their home to the seven-year old girl, Marion and eight-year-old, Dominic

Moraco. Despite the very limited material resources and obstacles posed by the Department of Social Welfare, the Ruzzis raised these children as their own. This act of love would reap an unlimited measure of blessings. Both children, under the tutelage of the saints, would serve the Lord. Dominic would in time marry, raise a family, and be called as an evangelist in the Church. Dominic's son, Dennis, as prophesied by Sister Marietta, would also be called into the office of evangelist. Marion would marry Angelo Maisano, and both would remain dedicated servants in the Lord's service.

“And Your Daughters Shall Prophesy”

Among many of the saints of the Church, Sister Marietta was regarded as having the gift of prophesy, having many things revealed to her that gave direction and insight into their affairs. Upon hearing of a particular sister's plan for some travel which would require leaving her younger children in the care of her adult children, Sister Marietta simply said that, “Something is going to happen whether you go or stay, but it will be better if you stay.” The sister decided against the trip, fortunately.



Detroit, Michigan in 1944:
Marion (Moraco) Maisano, Marietta Ruzzi, Sadie Cadman,
Barbara Ackman and Connie Moraco

When the morning arrived that the sister would have been gone, her house caught on fire, and she was able to warn and protect her sleeping family during this terrible affair.

Early one morning, after the children had gone to school, being alone in the house, a strange man appeared at Sister Marietta's door demanding all her money and jewels. Having very little wealth at all, the thief (who had entered the home) placed his revolver on the nape of Sister Marietta's neck threatening to kill her. Suddenly, horror filled the man's eyes! The thief recanted his actions and began to walk back to the entrance exclaiming to an apparent other being, "Please don't kill me! I have a family to support. Please, don't kill me!" He quickly fled.

When Brother Ralph Frammolino had arrived at her house later on that day, she tried inconspicuously to hide that which had happened. Strangely, Brother Ralph began to question her as to what was wrong. She started to cry, and then related that morning's incident. Much to her surprise, Brother Ralph began to unfold the dream given to him that previous night in which he saw all that had happened to Marietta. At the point when the thief threatened her with his revolver, Brother Ralph saw a heavenly being bearing a sword within the same room. It was this heavenly messenger who had frightened the intruder off!

The Lord continued by Marietta's side. Just before her death, as her health fluctuated between small upswings and deep plummets, Jesus Christ appeared to her, apparently waiting at the Gate of Heaven for her arrival. She would be prepared to meet this wondrous fate, which occurred on May 11, 1956. (*The Gospel News*, June 1956, p. 5)

Children of the Saints in World War II

In September of 1939, Adolf Hitler's armies invaded Poland, thus igniting World War II, and on December 7, 1941, the Japanese air force attacked the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor, drawing America into the conflict. The children of the saints entered the ranks of the military. As the war raged on, the concern would magnify. Many of the brothers and sisters went into much fasting and prayer and the Lord gave them to understand that He would take care of their children.

In December of 1942, Frank DiDonato was drafted into the service, just three months following his marriage—being placed into the infantry. Twelve years prior in 1930, Frank’s parents had found and accepted the Gospel; a year later, Frank, as a nine-year-old boy, was blessed in the Church. Frank’s life changed radically, now being constantly filled with church services of one kind or another—Sunday School, MBA, prayer services, and even Ladies’ Circle. During this time, he had learned to love and trust the Lord, yet, Frank states:

When I was 15 years old, I was called by the Lord to be baptized, but I refused because I was afraid I would lose all of my friends and I wanted to be “someone big” in the world. I was a good ball player and also good in boxing (later with politics). But, the Lord always was there to keep me away from these things because He had another thing in store for me and was very patient with me.

Now, as he faced the grim realities of war, Frank would rely upon the blessing he had received as a child, and the prayers of the saints for encouragement and strength. He wrote in his letters to his wife, Rose, and to Brother Nicholas Pietrangelo, “. . . that if the Lord spared my life, I would join the Church.”

In 1944, just following the Battle of the Bulge in Germany, Frank was captured by the Germans. His lost dog tags were picked up by his Quartermaster and sent back home to the United States, which practice was usually done for G.I.s killed in action. A grieving family, however, would later rejoice at a Ladies’ Circle meeting when Sister Fannie Pontillo related a dream, which she had the night before of Frank’s safety and well-being. Frank escaped and rejoined his unit. Brother Frank continues:

On January 23, 1945, we were about to take the city of Cologne, Germany near Berlin. Allied forces were taking over and possessing Germany. Germany was losing the war. I was going around the house on one side and a SS trooper was coming around the other side. We both met at the same time and the shock! I had a rifle and before I could bring it to a shooting position, he, having a burp gun, which fires

36 rounds, hit my ammunition belt, which was strapped on the chest and shoulders. The bullet hit my arm and ripped it wide open. I fell to the ground and he was firing all 36 rounds around my body, missing me with every shot, showing that the Lord did not forget me. Before he could reload the weapon, I got up off the ground and even beat Jesse Owens' mark. I ran about 100 yards and he fired a single shot and hit me in the 9th rib, the bullet is still there.

I lost consciousness. The medic came and gave me a shot of morphine and I heard him say to cut the arm off at the shoulder.

The medic was going to tag Frank for an amputation of the arm from the shoulder. In maintaining a degree of awareness, he fought off the medic claiming that, "they are not cutting my arm off, the Lord is in the matter!" The Lord was indeed in the matter; Frank would keep his arm through a muscle graft from a dead soldier. Nevertheless, his wounds would render him about 40% disabled, granting him a good arm, but with a weak grip and little feeling.

Frank's wound earned him the privilege of returning home. Out of the ten soldiers that Frank knew who had pregnant wives waiting state-side, only Frank would live to see the birth of his son. God had spared his life. But Frank would struggle in reconciling the promise he had made to the Lord. Frank states:

I came home. I was then called [by the Lord] again and I instead went to a football game. I was still afraid of losing my friends. Well, I stayed away from Church for 36 years and I am very thankful to God for His patience in me. Because in 1973, April 28, I went to Conference and the Lord touched me and I was baptized. Now I am the happiest man in the world.

With his wife, Rose, getting baptized on January 28, 1974, they became faithful, ever dedicated servants for the Lord. And in becoming a deacon of the Church, Brother Frank became a very visible presence, presiding over his duties at many of the District, General Church, and GMBA functions.

Brother Louis Pietrangelo

Louis Pietrangelo was born to Brother Anthony and Sister Rose Pietrangelo. As a child, Louis learned about the Gospel, right from wrong, and felt the loving care of the saints. As he approached manhood, however, he sought his own lifestyle and drifted from the church activities and friends. Brother Lou also shares his wartime experience:

My first real encounter with the Lord was when I volunteered for military service in World War II in 1942. I was trained as a flight engineer and gunner on B-17 and B-29 aircraft. After extensive training (two years), our squadron was ready for combat in the European theater. For some strange reason, a few days before I was to leave, I became very ill with bronchitis and was hospitalized. My squadron left for Europe without me. I felt very bad, not being able to go with them, but little did I know that God was in the matter. When the war was over, I met one of the crewmembers from my B-17 squadron who bailed out over Germany and was captured by the Germans. He told me that almost 90 percent of the squadron was shot down over the Pollester oil fields (a bombing target).

After my recovery, and getting out of the hospital, I was shipped to another unit (20th Air Force). After training for another year on B-29's, I flew overseas to the Pacific Theater to a U.S. air base on a small island called Tinian, about 1500 miles off the mainland of Japan.

One evening, while preparing for flight takeoff (one per minute), as we waited in our positions to get on the runway, I decided to write a letter to my mother. As I began to write, a feeling came over me to look up, and as my eyes looked upward, I saw one of the planes which had just lifted and was airborne about 200 feet in the air. All of a sudden, from engine #1 burst out a dark cloud of smoke, and the plane dipped and started to come down toward me. At this point, I got upon my feet and turned and started to run and pray, asking God to spare my life that I might go home to my family. The next thing I knew, a voice spoke to me saying to "Fall down." There was a tremendous explosion and the voice told me to "Run." Out of the dust and smoke, the voice spoke to me one more time and told me to "Stop," and, as I stopped, an engine came flying just over my head, just in front of me.

I don't remember much after that. They found me on the other side of the island about one mile away, and I was hospitalized for observa-

tion. I did find out later that, of 30 crewmen, I was the only one to come out alive. God had surely answered my prayers.

It would be some years later when Brother Louis was baptized on October 26, 1958. He was ordained an elder on May 27, 1979.

The Harper Road Building

In 1955, it was decided upon by the branch membership of Detroit Branch #1 at Hall and Devine to relocate and purchase two city lots at the corner of Gateshead and Chandler Park Streets in a more northeastern part of the City of Detroit. Soon, a sign would be posted on these newly purchased lots notifying the public of the Church's intention of building there. Brother Nicholas Pietrangelo, then presiding elder, adds:

We purchased them for \$10,000 with the understanding that if the neighbors did not complain, we would proceed with the building. We all were happy to find a place. Sister Marietta Ruzzi was ill at the time, so I went over to see her and give her the good news. I proceeded to tell her of the location. When I was through, she told me that this was not the place, because the Lord had showed her the lots, the building, and also her attending the dedication that would take place and who would be the first speaker. (This was all in a dream she had.) I asked her to tell me where the lots were that she saw, but she told me to inquire of the Lord to direct me, and when I did find the property that I should tell her.

Sister Marietta's experience turned out to be of God. The residents of that neighborhood felt the location to be unacceptable as a place of worship, although the lots were zoned to accommodate this purpose. After vigorous protest by the neighbors, it was decided upon by the Church to sell the lots to keep the peace rather than endure the litigation and courtroom proceedings. Brother Nicholas continues:

I then (realized) that Sister Ruzzi was right. Our money was returned. I began to pray and look around until I found 5 lots, 20 feet each, on Harper and Three Mile Drive. So before making the purchase, I went back to see Sister Ruzzi and told her what I had found. She asked

me if there was a large tree on the back part of the property. I said, "Yes, there is." She then told me that that was the place she saw (in her dream).

Shortly thereafter, in 1956, these same five lots were purchased for a cost of \$11,400. When it was decided to build, Brother Joseph Tocco, a building contractor by trade, was placed in charge of supervising the construction of the church building. It was at this time that a remarkable incident took place testifying to the omnipotent hand of God. Brother Tony Scolaro of Branch #1 relates:

As the building progressed, Brother Tocco purchased marble windowsills, which had all been cut out of one block of marble, so that they matched perfectly. They were purchased from, and delivered to the building site by "Meier Stone and Marble Company" located at the corner of French and Gratiot Avenues.

However, much to Brother Tocco's dismay, the next morning when he arrived at the church building site, he discovered that during the night, three of the marble sills had been stolen. He knew that they could be replaced, but not out of the same block of marble, and therefore would not match.

At this point, Brother Tocco did not know what to do; he prayed to the Lord and asked the Lord to forgive the person or persons who stole the marble windowsills. Brother Tocco said that shortly thereafter, he heard a voice telling him to go back to the company where he had purchased the sills.

Truly, God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform! It appears that the person who stole the marble sills desired to have them cut up into smaller pieces for his own use. So he brought them to, of all places, "Meier Stone and Marble Company," located at the corner of French and Gratiot Avenues, and asked that they be cut into small pieces.

When the salesman saw and recognized the marble sills as those belonging to the Church, which Brother Tocco purchased, he took the sills from the person presenting them, placed them to one side, and directed that person to a large box which was filled with an assortment of scrap pieces of marble and told him that he could have all he wanted to take with him.

Brother Tocco went back to the company for the purpose of buying windowsills to replace the three sills, which were stolen. As he approached

the salesman, the salesman said, "I know why you are here." He reached under the counter, produced the original three windowsills, and presented them to Brother Tocco. Brother Tocco thanked the Lord and the salesman for preserving them intact.

During this period of construction, the saints met for their services in the Belgian Hall. Finally, construction was completed, with the total cost coming to \$55,000. On December 23, 1956, the new building located on I624I Harper was dedicated, with Brother Thurman S. Furnier (then first counselor of the General Church) presiding over the meeting. Filling its seating capacity of 216, over 100 extra chairs would need to be set up with Brother Matthew Miller commenting, "... yet these were not enough; an undetermined number had to stand wherever possible." Notably, Sister Marietta Ruzzi had seen this and the other events of the dedication service a month before she passed away, prior to the actual dedication service. (*The Gospel News*, June 1956, p. 5; February 1957, p. 2; and January 1982, p. 2)

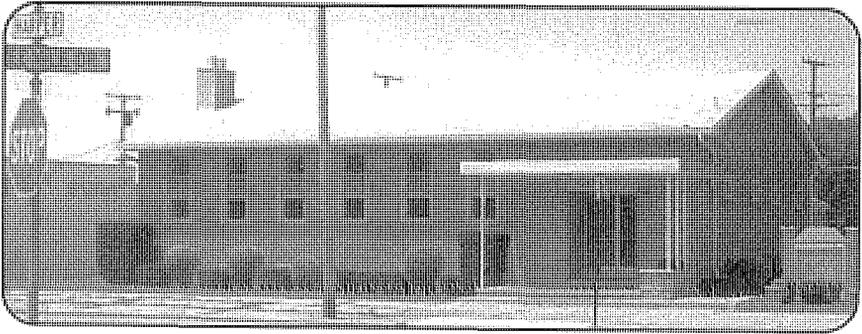
A Changing of the Guard

By the mid-1950s, many of the early saints who had pioneered the new and spreading works would complete their role on the district's forefront. Some would be directed elsewhere to other works, with others passing on to their heavenly reward.

By the time Branch #1 had relocated into their new building on Harper, a second generation of saints began to occupy the seats of administration. With this changing of the guard, these newcomers, unlike their parents, enjoyed the benefits of a secondary education and an ease of the English language. Yet, because they had experienced the marvelous workings of the Lord throughout their early lives, they would now carry with them the same commitment and fierce determination that they witnessed in their parents. Brother Tony Pietrangelo, who had served as presiding elder from 1946 through 1953, would see his son, Brother Nicholas Pietrangelo, serve in this capacity from 1954 through 1973 and lead the branch through its move.

The Harper building project, with its need for laborers, served as a catalyst that brought a younger generation to assist in the work. Many did heed, not only this call, but eventually the call to a greater work. Brother Nicholas:

The new church building on Harper and Three Mile Drive seemed to stimulate the interest of our young people, especially our young men, who spent many days and nights of their time to help build the church. The first three years, I remember well, many of our young people and children of the saints, who never attended church in their adulthood, started to come to our services.



Detroit, Branch #1 Church Building on Harper and Three Mile Drive, dedicated in 1956

These children of the Hall and Devine generation had grown up and moved away from the Church, although they considered it their own. So with the building of the new branch and the need for laborers, these individuals came forward to help their parents and peers and devoted much of their time, energy, and talent to the work.

Brother Nicholas continues:

Through the preaching of the Word, the Spirit of God which was evident in our meetings, and with all the beautiful blessings we experienced, they began to ask for their baptisms. In three years, we baptized 45 people! There were ten on one Sunday alone! Some of them are

ministers, teachers, deacons, and deaconesses in the Church. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

THE WEST SIDE MISSION - BRANCH #2

Against the cold backdrop of the large industrialized City of Detroit in 1922, it was in a streetcar on the west side where two Italian immigrant strangers, through an apparent chance meeting, discovered their origin from the same city of Italy. In their surprise they embraced, wept and shouted with joy, ignoring the strange glances from the onlookers.

To these young Italian men, Federico Straccia and Emilio Carlini, opportunity had afforded them similar childhood reflections of the beautiful Adriatic port city of San Benedetto del Tronto and a certain commonness only lonely, foreign immigrants would know. In the old country, their families had been close, yet now in becoming "paesani," their friendship would endure a lifetime—little knowing from the start that they would ultimately share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and together labor in the fulfillment of God's plan.

When Federico Straccia first came to America in 1920 as a single man, he went to Pennsylvania where he worked in a coal mine. Around 1922, he moved to Detroit. Meanwhile, Federico's parents in Italy had arranged a marriage for their son to the 14 1/2 year-old daughter of family friends. After Federico spent nearly four years in America, allowing himself to get a financial foothold and for Palmina to get older, he went back to Italy in 1924. He and Palmina were married soon thereafter. Federico came back alone to America for three more years to further secure enough money to bring over and support his new bride. They lived in Detroit on the city's west side.

Emilio (Emil) Carlini had come to America in 1913 as a boy of 19, where he had lived in Reading, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Illinois (with a sister and brother-in-law); and later on in Detroit. When World War I broke out in Europe, he fought for the United States, experiencing the Lord's protective hand in sparing his life. Emil Carlini married Anna Madonia; Anna would, through her mother and father, meet and obey

the Gospel Restored in the Detroit Branch on Sunday, November 25, 1928.

The New Convert

Living in the west side suburb of Lincoln Park with the Church on the east side of Detroit would prove to be a formidable barrier to some. Sister Anna thought otherwise. She wrote on what transpired shortly after her baptism:

I got up one Sunday morning at 5:00 a.m. to prepare myself and my four children to go to church at Branch #1, a distance of 18 miles. I soon discovered that there was a terrible snow and windstorm raging, making it dangerous for one to travel. My husband warned me not to leave home, but I was determined to go to church with a firm belief in my soul that God would protect me and my four children.

I left home at 7:30 a.m., had one mile to walk to the streetcar, and had to make changes in order to reach my destination. When we got in the streetcar, my little children and [I] were the only ones in the car. I began to sing hymns of praise unto the Lord—the conductor said to me, “How come you picked a day like this to go to church? Don’t you know that it is dangerous on the road?” I answered, “If Jesus goes with me, I’ll go anywhere.” And the more the storm increased, the closer I was to the Lord. After two hours of riding and making other changes, I finally reached the church. The meeting that day was a glorious one because the Lord watched from on high. The special effort I made to be in His temple was worthwhile.

At 5:00 p.m., when it was time to go home, the storm had increased doubly. My father offered to take me home, but I told him that the Lord, who had brought me to church, would also take me back home. After two hours of struggling through the terrible storm, I finally arrived home safe and sound.

Later that evening after everyone had gone to bed, Sister Anna prayed to the Lord for encouragement, in that she was the only one at home who was baptized and that she was 18 miles from the Detroit Branch. She prayed that the Lord would send a messenger to encourage her. As she slept that night, the Lord gave her a dream in which she was visited by a

young boy around seven years old, stating he was sent to “feed her soul with milk and honey.” The young child began:

. . . The Lord who is in heaven has looked down below and has accepted the sacrifice you have made today to honor Him. Your sacrifice is laid before His throne. . . . If you stand firm on that Solid Rock which is Jesus the Lord, through your obedience and patience, your companion will obey the Gospel and the Lord will use him as an instrument in His hands. (*The Gospel News*, December 1958, p. 3-4)

Although Emil Carlini had no use for the Church at this time, (he once scared away the saints with his shotgun when he arrived home from hunting and found a service being conducted), the Lord would make great use of him in a later day. Of Emil Carlini, Brother V. James Loyalvo wrote:

. . . Among his many accomplishments, he became an artist in the plastering trade. Little did he think that one day he would be using this talent in The Church of Jesus Christ. He was able to provide an ample living for his family even during the Great Depression. . . . Although our brother had a limited education in Italy, his expert skill enabled him to rise to the position of supervisor at Ford Motor Company (in which, as foreman of a construction crew, he supervised over 200 laborers). He also had done work on a personal level for the Ford family. However, this skill proved a more valuable asset to The Church of Jesus Christ than many may realize. (*The Gospel News*, May 1980, p. 7)

The Seed

The Lord had set in motion His plan for the Gospel to be established on the city’s west side, a plan which, in fact, had begun to take root a few years prior to Anna’s baptism by a seed of hope within Brother Ishmael D’Amico:

Now that a church had been established on the east side, I desired greatly that The Church of Jesus Christ would be established on the west side of Detroit. I prayed for this matter continually. (D’Amico, p. 25)

Brother D'Amico's efforts began in the fall of 1927 when he was asked by some newly baptized members, Brother and Sister Cerame, to visit their friends residing in the small west side town of Ecorse. The visit itself would result to be relatively insignificant in contrast to the message received en route to the home. Brother Ishmael:

Going along Schaefer Road and passing Fort Street, we came to South Electric Street. It was here I heard a voice from heaven, which said, "You desire a place in which to preach the Gospel. See how large this field is?" Actually, I desired that the Gospel would be preached on the west side and through this experience I realized that there was much work to be done there. It seemed as though this was an answer to my prayers. When I heard this voice, I received a great blessing. (D'Amico, p. 26)

But six months passed and nothing transpired for a west side work. Instead, Brother Ishmael was called in the meanwhile to establish a work of the Church in Sopris, Colorado. Finally, after a short stay in Chicago on his return home, Brother Ishmael arrived back in Detroit on May 16, 1928, and the door was opened for the work to begin. The Lord would start by establishing employment for Brother Ishmael in the Dearborn area:

On the 17th of May, I began to look for work and while I was thus engaged, a voice said to me, "Don't go searching for work. Go to Ford Rouge on Monday morning and a job will be ready for you." I thanked God and obeyed.

On Monday morning, there were so many people ahead of me that I waited in line half a day. Those who were skilled in some trade were the ones being hired. The others were being rejected. I thought, "Lord, I am just a common laborer."

Then a voice said, "I am the One who has prepared this work for you." When I reached the office door, a man took my arm and led me into the office. I was examined and put to work. I thanked God for His Goodness.

Working at Ford gave me an opportunity to start a spiritual work also on the west side of Detroit. I prayed continually in this behalf until finally the church was planted on the west side. The first member

to be baptized was a woman named Anna Carlini. In the beginning, meetings were held near the Ford factory at the home of a friend, but later we held meetings at Sister Carlini's home. (D'Amico, p. 30)

The West Side Meetings Begin

The meetings in Sister Carlini's home started by a request from her in 1929. Sister Anna exclaimed, "The doors were opened wide and everyone was welcome." When Brother Joseph Dulisse returned from Pennsylvania, Brother Ishmael would rely upon him for his assistance. (*The Gospel News*, September 1966, p. 1)

These meetings on the west side were initially held only on Thursday nights, with the saints from the Detroit Branch occasionally coming out to help with the attendance. Sunday meetings, however, were still held at the Detroit Branch on Devine and Hall Streets, which meant considerable traveling across town for anyone attending church from the west side. In July 1929, authorization was granted to establish a west side mission, putting Brothers Ishmael D'Amico and Joseph Dulisse in charge.

A Friendship Renewed

Later in 1929, after about a year of no communication between the Carlini and Straccia families, Frederico and Emil met again, unexpectedly. The Straccias, at this time, were considering moving to California and had been boarding at a home temporarily. But Emil's news that day would effect a change in the Straccias' plans.

Although he had yet to be baptized into this new faith, Emil told of his visits to the Church and was eager to share his testimony with Frederico. He then invited the Straccias to the Thursday night meetings held at his home.

The Straccias enjoyed the fellowship with the saints and began to attend the Thursday night meetings regularly. But, one Thursday night in the deep of winter in 1930, Palmina was bedfast with a very bad cold; therefore, Frederico hadn't planned on attending church that evening. Upon not seeing the Straccias at the service, Sister Anna took it upon

herself to call them up, she being one of the few members with a telephone.

While talking to Frederico, she turned to Brother Ishmael, who had previously arrived at her home, and stated, "Frederico wants to talk to you." Sister Anna then said to Frederico, "Brother Ishmael wants to talk to you." (Neither request had actually been made.)

A conversation ensued between the two men. What transpired over the phone caused Frederico to walk 2 to 3 miles in the frigid air from Oakwood Boulevard to the Carlini's home in Lincoln Park. Although the meeting was about to end by the time Frederico arrived, the ministry started preaching again, and by the night's end Frederico was touched upon to ask for his baptism.

The following Sunday, in the blistering cold, the saints chipped away two feet of ice in the Detroit River off the shore of Elizabeth Park in Detroit. Frederico was baptized on January 25, 1930, thus making him the first brother to be baptized on the west side of Detroit. One week later, Emil Carlini was also baptized. Sister Anna Carlini writes:

After these two conversions (Frederico and Emil), we decided to hold our services in a school building on the west side of Detroit. We began to prosper spiritually and increased in number. Later, when the West Side became an established mission, elders, teachers, deacons, and deaconesses were ordained. (*The Gospel News*, September 1966, p. 1)

Bayside School Building

The old defunct school on Bayside Blvd. in Detroit served as the mission's more permanent residence for about ten years. The services were now held on Sundays as well as weekdays, initially in an upstairs classroom then later down on the main floor. Here it became the deacons' job to arrive early before the meeting on cold Sunday mornings to stoke the old coal-burning stove located in the back of the classroom (also used to heat water), and the deaconesses' job during the week was to wash its wooden floors and clean the one bathroom located in the hall. In the summer, when days seemed unbearably hot and humid, a single Casablanca fan functioned as the cooling system.

Palmina Straccia was baptized next on March 16, 1930, followed by Frederico's brother Giuseppe, on April 30, 1930. Soon, other converts followed. A Branch #2 editor writes:

It was through . . . [Brother Emil Carlini] that many other newly converted brothers received help in obtaining work. This, in turn, helped to stabilize the membership and contributed to its growth into a branch. Within ten years (from 1930), the branch had almost ninety members, along with many visitors and children in attendance. (*The Gospel News*, May 1980, p. 7)

Early Pillars in the Church

The work began to grow through the testimonies of the saints. Sometime near the beginning of 1930, through a friendship that developed between Brother Emil Carlini and a Biaggio Scarsella at Ford Motor Company where they both worked, Sister Anna Carlini found occasion to give her testimony to Biaggio at his residence on Bayside Blvd. Biaggio's large house, filled with boarders, was located near the mission, on the same side of the street. Apparently, Biaggio was intrigued by the cheerful deportment of the saints. He asked Anna, "Why do you people go to this church, sing, and do all these good things?" Anna's response was, "We were baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ. Come and see next Sunday. The Church is open to everybody."

With that simple invitation, Biaggio came the next Sunday and ultimately joined the Church. At the time he had four boarders living with him: Antonio Gentile, Joe Bologna, Vivoli Fiore, and John Orlando. Taking in boarders was a common practice among Italian immigrant homeowners to supplement their income. The witnessing of Biaggio's baptism at the river began to have an effect on the lives of these boarders. Gradually, their raucous living, the weekend binges of card playing, drinking and late hours ceased. What began almost as a lark to invite them to church concluded with each one recognizing the need within himself to obey the Gospel. This they did in time. Sometime later, Biaggio's wife, Mary, would also join the Church.

Brother Joe Bologna's Testimony

On June 22, 1930, Brother Joseph Bologna was baptized by Brother Ishmael D'Amico. Brother Joe recalls:

. . . Before joining the Church, I was reading Dante's trilogy, *The Divine Comedy*, concerning his idea of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell. The description of Hell shook me greatly and I was so fearful that I couldn't sleep. I couldn't find rest anywhere. The Lord showed me a dream where I was on a flat mountain all by myself, thinking, "Why am I here?" I saw from far away something moving towards me. It was like big apes carrying 2-foot long knives. I asked myself, "Where am I going to go how will I get away?" As they came closer, something lifted me and put me down about a mile away. This happened twice. After I was baptized, the dream came back to me and the explanation was clear: the Gospel lifted me up and delivered me from evil. (*The Gospel News*, February 1985, p. 8)

Sister Clara Gentile's Testimony

Antonio and Clara Gentile were married in Italy, yet, as was commonly practiced in that day, Antonio (Anthony) would first come to America to secure some finances, then send for his wife. This began for Anthony in 1927 when he first stepped on American soil; he was somewhat successful in securing work for a few years. When the stock market crashed, however, the subsequent Depression brought an end to his employment for the next five years. During this time, though, the doors of the Gospel were opened to him through the Scarsellas' home, and he was baptized in 1930.

Reluctant to leave Italy because of Anthony's financial hardship, Clara was eventually persuaded by friends and relatives to join her husband in America. Upon arriving, she learned that her husband had left the Catholic Church to join another. This infuriated her to such an extent that she began to plot on how she could take him away from the Church.

Being a dance instructor in Italy, Clara now determined to open a dance hall in hopes of eventually earning enough money to allow her and her husband to travel back to Italy. On her third day in this country,

Anthony took her to a Church conference in Detroit. At first, the awkwardness of not speaking the English language brought increased resentment, leading her to secretly mock the saints. However, something greater would prevail that transcended the language barrier. The love of God among the saints began to attract her to the Church.

On the Saturday before her baptism, Clara went to the Lord in prayer, rehearsing all the good she had experienced through the saints. Also on her mind was the affliction of Parkinson's disease that was beginning to take effect on her husband's health. She reasoned that, if what had been said were true concerning the miracles and authenticity of the Gospel, the Lord would heal her husband as a sign that she should get baptized. Also, she questioned her ability to remain faithful all the days of her life. She wanted reassurance from the Lord.

As Clara slipped into bed, she contemplated whether she had asked too much of the Lord. But, suddenly, she saw in a vision a big circle on the ceiling. In the middle of the circle was the picture of Jesus' upper body. She saw blood falling from His head, heard the sound of the drops as they hit her bed. The vision was given to her three more times that night.

Although Brother Tony would not be healed of his affliction, Clara now understood that like the Lord, we would all have to carry our own cross. On June 23, 1935 she was baptized by Brother Joe Bologna, just three months after arriving in this country. (*The Gospel News*, November 1985, p. 2)

Others continued to come into the Church. Most of these meetings were still preached in Italian. When Brother Frederico, who displayed a commanding ability of the Italian language, was ordained into the ministry, many visitors came simply to listen to his preaching. Yet, Brother Frederico was also blessed by God with the gift of tongues, which sometimes manifested itself in a melodious singing. All glory to God, Brother Frederico was not by any means a natural singer. On one occasion, he, along with Sister Vincenzia Dulisse (also gifted with the speaking of tongues and wife to Brother Joe) sang simultaneously under the influence

of the Spirit in an unknown tongue, a never-to-be-forgotten experience for those who witnessed this.

Further Organization of the West Side

Growth was rapid—in December 31, 1932, the membership count showed 34, and one year later, the count grew to 52 members. All of this activity would attract the attention of the General Church. At the General Church Conference in Lorain, Ohio, in October of 1934, permission was granted to the West Side Mission to organize into a branch, to be known as Detroit Branch #2. The first Presiding Elder was Brother Joseph Dulisse.

The Building on South Electric Street

In the fall of 1927, Brother Ishmael D'Amico had received a revelation as to where a building of the Church was to be located. Some years later, on the Fort Street Bridge overlooking the field off of South Electric and Schaefer, Brother Ishmael turned to Brother Frederico Straccia and instructed the brethren where the new Branch #2 building should be:

I shall always remember the blessing I received at S. Electric and Schaefer Road. Some brothers were looking for a lot on which to build the church. I told them my experience and about the great blessing I had received at that spot. They purchased the lot at this place and the church was built there. (D'Amico, pp. 30-31.)

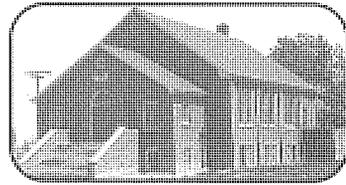
The lots were purchased in 1939 and the saints themselves built the church. The work was long, hard and laborious, digging the basement out by hand shovels, but the saints persisted. Brother Emil Carlini was appointed to be in charge of construction; however, certain issues arose which caused Brother Emil, at one point, to quit the project. But the Lord wanted Brother Emil back on the job, and He used a dream to persuade him. (Cadman History, pp. 346-347.)

From that point on, as Brother Emil promised, the Church would see his handiwork. The tally would exceed a dozen church buildings, from New York to California. The beautiful interior plastered walls and fine cornice work now serve as a tribute to the hard labor of this brother, and others who accompanied him, which in many cases turned out to be Brothers Joe Straccia and John Romano. Brother Emil Carlini died on February 24, 1980, 40 years past the time when he was given an experience that his life would be extended.

The Dedication of the New Building

September 22, 1940, marked the day of dedication for the new West Side building located on South Electric Street in Detroit. Visitors came from across Detroit, Windsor, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kansas and California.

Visiting Brother Alma Cadman, president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, was the opening speaker. The Lord confirmed His favor on the day's proceedings; the gift of tongues was spoken, followed by a woman requesting baptism. (Cadman History, pp. 345-347.)



Detroit Branch #2 on South Electric

The Prayer Vigils

For the Branch #2 saints, Sunday night, December 7th, 1941 had started as any other MBA evening, although the aim that evening was to rehearse for their upcoming Christmas program. Suddenly, like the rest of the world, the day's activities came to a deadening halt. The news that night of the bombing of Pearl Harbor was relayed to the branch in person, because a phone had yet to be installed in the branch. Brother Emil and Sister Anna Carlini, of Branch #2, would remain at home that evening in deep concern for the welfare of their son, Joe, who was in the Marines and stationed at Pearl Harbor.

The assurance given to the saints regarding their sons also held true for Corporal Joe Carlini in the late summer of 1945 while stationed on the Island of Okinawa. Joe Carlini states:

My testimony is to illustrate the power of prayer. Because of the constant and never ceasing prayers of my mother, Sister Anna Carlini, on my behalf, my life was saved not once, but twice one night during World War II.

... I was serving with the United States Marines. My company was [the] combat Engineers. Another marine and [I] had to stay with some of our equipment, which we were watching in a clearing. This night, Japanese patrols were very active, so the Marine infantry set up a defense line on some high ground behind us about 100 feet. The moon was full and almost like daylight. A 30 caliber machine gun nest on the line above and behind us saw a squad of Japanese soldiers run across the clearing to the tent we were in and squat down behind it. So the machine gunner shot a burst of fire next to the front tent flap, which was open, and shouted to us to get out. The other marine was gone in a flash but I couldn't find my boots. By the time I headed out of the tent, rifle and cartridge belt in my right hand and boots in my left hand, some time had passed. The crew on the machine gun nest could see and hear someone approaching our lines and the order was anything that moves, shoot it.

Well, I made it to the lines. The gunner called me over and said, "I could see a silhouette moving toward us. The lookouts could see something coming up the hill and [so I] squeezed the trigger. My hand had no strength. I could not squeeze that burst off. My hand had nothing. It hung limp. This is the craziest thing that ever happened to me. You are one lucky marine."

The Japanese squad hadn't moved as yet and a marine lieutenant assigned me to a position on the line as a rifleman, to the right of the machine gun nest, to help protect the right flank. Every eye in the sector was on my tent waiting for that squad to move. Sometime later, something, some pressure, on my face began to push me backwards. I was in a sitting position, with my knees near my chest, and this force flattened me on my back. The pressure on my face closed my eyes and I could not move. A Japanese automatic rifle opened up on my right. I opened my eyes and the tracer bullets were clearing my chest by about one inch. It seemed like they fired a whole clip of ammo. Every fourth round is a red tracer, for the gunner to keep his sight on. The enemy fire hit the

machine gun nest and killed two marines, including the gunner. For a reason I did not understand, I was spared.

Years later, it was explained to me about the prayer vigil of the mothers of the servicemen overseas and the experiences that God would watch and protect the sons of the saints.

Twenty-five years later, at the 1970 GMBA campout in Canfield, Ohio, Brother Joe Milantoni baptized Joe Carlini. Later, he was ordained a teacher.

Brother Querino (Reno) Bologna

Brother Reno's first exposure to the Church was through his own brother, Joe, in the early 1930s. He moved in with his brother Joe, who was boarding with the Scarsellas. By this time, they, along with a few other boarders, had joined the Church. Reno says:

I was very observant on how they acted, because I had known them before they joined the Church, and they were quite a bunch. I could tell you that the routine in that house started on Friday night after work to Sunday afternoon. It was one of continuous card playing and drinking wine. I was very, very impressed that all of this was gone.

When a visiting evangelist, Brother Patsy DiBattista, had come to the mission that Sunday and then later dropped by the Scarsellas that evening, Reno had an opportunity to discuss the Faith of the Church with him. Brother Patsy challenged him, "If you don't believe me, ask the Lord." This Reno did.

The result of Reno's prayer was evident two weeks later on April 24, 1932, when he attended a Sunday morning meeting under the sound of visiting Brother Thurman Furnier. With the topic being the divinity of The Book of Mormon, it was the manner in which he spoke, his faith and conviction that impressed Reno. Reno states:

I began to feel that everything he was saying was coming from God. I knew that it was the absolute truth. Upon hearing this and feeling the way I was feeling about it, it really upset me, because I had never really been that sure about anything in my life.

To Reno, this was the confirmation he had asked for. By 1939, Brother Reno had met and married Sister Isabelle Brutz from Niles, Ohio. He was ordained into the ministry on May 5, 1946.

Leaders of a New Day

With the older saints passing on to their reward, the void in leadership would be filled by a second generation of saints whom the Church had groomed for the weightier tasks that lay before Her. This new generation arose from the spiritual experiences of their parents from a simpler day. What differed, though, were the societal and educational advantages afforded them that their parents never knew, which helped them meet some of the more complex challenges of their day.

Two young and dynamic leaders of that day from Branch #2 were both ordained into the ministry at the same time in 1950—Brothers Dominic Thomas and Joseph Milantoni. Shortly after their ordination these two men served the Church by making regular Sunday trips to Muncey to minister to the Native Americans there. A brief account of Brother Dominic's life has been provided in the Leadership Chapter.

A True Evangelist and Missionary: Brother Joe Milantoni

Since most of Brother Joe's ministry took place after 1960, a more detailed account of his life will be included in the next volume. However, for now, we will provide just a small glimpse of the giant shadow cast by this great man of faith. A word picture framed by Brother Ralph Frammolino after Brother Joe passed away does a masterful job of this:

When I was a boy growing up in the Michigan-Ontario District, I attended a church program that revolved around the story of a man who was resisting the call of God. The climax of the story came when the man's stubbornness prompted a response from the Almighty Himself, represented in the play by a deep booming voice over the microphone. Although the moment was dramatic, everyone chuckled because they recognized the voice immediately. It belonged to Joe Milantoni.

The role was perfect. In the mind of at least this small boy, it only made sense that God, Himself, would have the same kind of smooth

bass voice that was the trademark of Brother Joe, a tireless evangelist in The Church of Jesus Christ.

From Detroit Branch 2 to Muncey, Canada; from San Carlos, Arizona to Detroit's Inner City that voice was an unmistakable balm and inspiration to the saints. It resounded with the truth, power, and conviction of the Restored Gospel. It was the standard for community singing, ringing out with such favorites as, "Oh, How I Love Jesus." It was a voice that echoed through the silence of a prayer service and touched the heart of God. It was a voice of profound boldness and comfort. . . .

As a young man, Brother Joe was blessed with a physical prowess and strength that made him an excellent football player. Perhaps he could have been a gridiron star, but the Lord had other plans.

Here was a worker, a true evangelist and missionary who would be willing to uproot his family and move thousands of miles away for the cause of Christ. His feet crunched the snows of Muncey, walked in the dust of San Carlos, and traveled down the forlorn skid row of Detroit in his search for a lost soul.

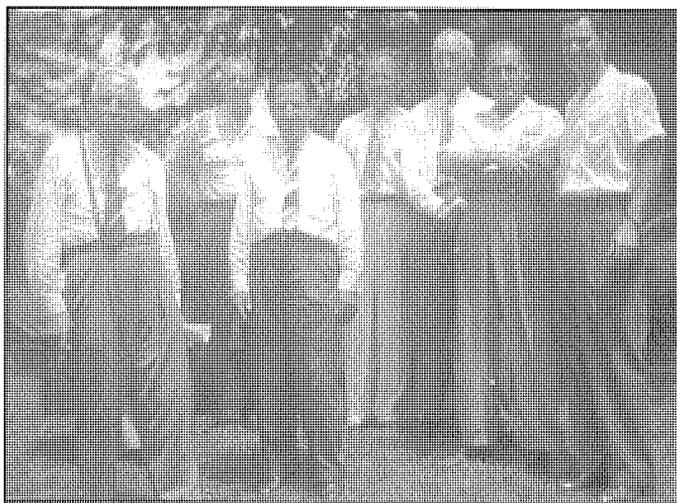


Photo taken in 1957:

William Cadman, Tony Lombardo, Dominic Moraco, Joseph Shazer,
Alma Cadman, George Neill, Dominic Thomas

THE EAST SIDE MISSION (BRANCH #3)

The baptisms of Joseph and Louise Madonia on March 4, 1928 brought much contention into their family. For this reason, it appeared to be an ominous start for the work that would eventually become the East Side Mission of Detroit—yet, a start which Brother Ishmael D’Amico had again been used of God to ignite by giving his testimony to the Madonia family three months prior.

The Madonia Family

The Madonia family had been a pillar in the Presbyterian Church and, according to their daughter, Pauline, “considered the most spiritual family in the congregation.” However, it was Louise who took her religion most seriously—petitioning the Lord daily for direction—and when the testimony of the Gospel was brought to her doorsteps, the Lord directed her and her husband along a different path. Sister Mary Loyalvo describes Louise’s new aim:

After accepting the Gospel, she became a very zealous person whose ultimate pleasure was to tell others about the Restored Gospel. She dedicated herself to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ, in that she was tireless in seeking out her neighbors and friends and telling them the story of Jesus. She spoke to her relatives unceasingly of her testimony, and she sought out the members of her former church, to tell them also of the Restored Gospel. (*The Gospel News*, August 1970)

Sister Louise’ zeal incited much resistance with her children. (All the daughters except Pauline were married.) Pauline, along with each of her five sisters, reacted angrily:

Immediately . . . it was as though war was declared in our home. We were all against them, mocked them, and made as much trouble as we possibly could. . . . (Cadman History, p. 354.)

For almost a year Brother Joe and Sister Louise’s family was fraught with discord and contention. “My parents implored us to question God

as to whether they had done the right thing,” Pauline continued: “But we were not seeking the truth, and considered it a waste of time.” (Cadman History, p. 355)

When Anna Carlini, the fourth daughter in the family, decided to attend a service, it was definitely not in search for the truth. Rather it was to impart her own wisdom. Using the testimony service as her forum, she intended to publicly denounce the Church. But, when the time came for Anna to stand and speak, a bewildering force rendered her speechless. She stood in embarrassment. In that moment, the Lord had stilled the angry spirit. He had humbled the proud heart, and the misguided energy of this young woman was no match for the Power of God. Shortly thereafter, on Sunday, November 25, 1928, Anna was baptized. The following year, on January 29, Josephina Palermo, the first daughter, was baptized also.

The only way to Providence Palermo’s heart, the Madonia’s third child, was through her three-year-old daughter. Providence, called Pearl or Pro, and her husband, Jerome, were beside themselves over the bout of whooping cough that had threatened the life of little Louise. With a furor, the fever raged. Even when Joe and Louise had pleaded for the child to be prayed upon by the elders of the Church, Pro had refused until finally the doctors had given up hope. The Palermo’s were left with little recourse but to humbly turn to the elders, these same men whom Pro and her sisters had mocked so cruelly. A healing took place shortly after the child was anointed, and a conversion transpired upon Jerome and Pro. Pro was baptized January 21, 1929, Jerome on February 3, 1929.

The Madonia’s second oldest daughter, Rose Ferranti, dreamed that she was listening to a sermon in her Presbyterian church and then noticed a very beautiful lady enter the auditorium. Rose states:

The moment I saw her, I felt a great love for her. My mind was no longer on the sermon, but to try and find out who she was. (Cadman History, p. 354)



The Madonia family with their daughters: Pearl (Providence) Palermo, Josephine Palermo, Pauline Dulisse, Anna Carlini, Rose Ferranti

Finally, when the meeting ended, the woman came directly to Rose, took her hand and kissed her. Rose then asked who she was, in which she responded, "I'm from The Church of Jesus Christ." When Rose asked whether she would come again, she flatly replied, "No. I have come here for you."

The dream continued with Rose passing by a room adorned in white, where the entrance was roped off, preventing her from entering to be with her mother and this previous woman, who were inside the room. But when Rose requested to enter, the woman refused, explaining that she was not prepared to enter, although it would not be long before she would be. Soon after the dream, on January 28, 1929, Rose was baptized into the Church. Miraculously, the diabetic condition that had afflicted Rose prior to her conversion was to be permanently healed. (Cadman History, p. 355)

At about this time, Brother Matthew Miller was moved upon to visit the Madonia family. Upon his arrival, it soon became clear as to why the

Lord had directed him to the home. Pauline, in seeing that Brother Miller was to stay for dinner, seized the opportunity to confront him on Church doctrine. Brother Matthew:

... [Pauline] thought she would give me the once over in the way of many difficult questions ... [but] the Lord being with me, I was able to answer all the questions and made peace between these wonderful parents and their daughter Pauline.

For the first time, Pauline had softened her stand against the Church; a glimmer of hope appeared. Brother Matthew continues:

When I was about to leave the home that day, Miss Madonia told me that in her mind she was so opposed to the Church at that time that she could not visit immediately but that should she ever visit, she would be doing so to become one of us. When I went away that day, I did so with great joy in my heart, for I felt that some day there would be another soul added to the fold of the Lord.

Soon after, one Sunday morning, Pauline heard the call. She had been asked to bring her parents' lunch to Church. Miraculously, as she walked up the steps to the front entrance on the corner of Hall and Devine, Pauline heard a celestial singing of angels. She was overcome with joy and wonderment realizing the truth of her parents' testimony, and on March 3, 1929 she was baptized. (*The Gospel News*, June 1946, p. 3)

In a dream where men were trying to take his life, Brother Ishmael had been warned that the new work would face difficulties. However, Brother Ishmael continued, "... the Lord had shown me that regardless of the trouble we would encounter, the Church would still be established in that vicinity." By the spring of 1929, one year after the baptisms of Joe and Louise, the difficulties that had encompassed the Madonia family had been put to rest. Five of the six daughters had come into the Church, a marvelous turnabout from one year previous. Louise Lito, the sixth daughter, would wait until July 7, 1932 to be baptized.

A Tribute to Sister Louise Madonia

How does one begin to write about a wonderful woman, her attributes, her determination, her sacrifices, her unwavering faith, her devotion to God, and above all, her unfailing service to The Church? I can only begin by saying, 'She was a saint.' There are so many good things I remember about her that I know I shall not find either the space or ability to describe her. . . .

God used this wonderful saint as an instrument in His hands to spread the Gospel, and surely she responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit without thought to her own welfare, but seeking rather the welfare of others. . . .

No one can say just how many persons were baptized because of her efforts, but suffice it to note that many were the ones she was able to help convert to the Lord, by His Grace. . . .

Detroit, Branch #3 grew from her efforts. When Branch #3 was established, she was the first sister there ordained as a deaconess, and she truly magnified the office by her heart, mind, and strength. She was interested in all people, especially the poor and needy, who received her uppermost affection . . . before she died she distributed all of her substances to the poor of the Church. (*The Gospel News*, August 1970, pp. 6-7)

Sister Louise would often walk long distances to share the Gospel with others. Two daughters of the Randazzo family, Sisters Mary Lovalvo and Sarah Watson recall the time she had walked to their home one frigid day, deep in the winter's freeze of 1933. With the Randazzo family's only shortly before being introduced to the Gospel, Sister Louise's intent was to testify of the goodness of the Lord in her life and expound upon the Faith of the Church. They marveled at her depth of faith and knowledge. But, it was her selfless act that day that had the greatest impact on them that they will never forget.

As Sister Louise was getting ready to leave, Brother Sam Randazzo offered to have his son, Mark, drive her home. Young Mark, not yet baptized at the time and still very cynical of the people associated with this new Church that seemed to be dividing their family, was less than enthused about the idea. However, something happened at that moment that touched even his hardened heart. First, Sister Louise, refused their

offer, saying she would prefer to walk; and then, at the conclusion of the visit, they all got on their knees to pray, and it was then that young Mark noticed that Sister Louise had holes in the bottom of her shoes. Only later did they realize that it was because of the countless miles she had walked giving her testimony to whoever would listen.

The Ausilio Family Finds the Church

Another family who was introduced to the Church during this period of time was the Ausilios. The following excerpts are from Sister Almerinda Kaczmarek's history of her family:

Vito Ausilio was born on September 19, 1892, in Terrazini, Sicily, and died at the age of 73 on November 22, 1965. His father . . . and mother . . . never married. . . . He had a hard life growing up in Sicily as he was physically abused by his half-brothers and uncles. It was as if they blamed him for the indiscretion of his parents. . . . When [his father] died, Vito . . . inherited nothing, not even his name.

He came to America alone at the age of 17 and worked in several states . . . at various hard physical-labor jobs. He sent money home to his mother to help support her . . . with the hope she would come to this country. She never came, and he never saw her again.

When Vito was in his mid-20s he came to Detroit and boarded with Rose Daleo. It was there he met 19-year-old Oliva Napolitano [Rose's sister]. . . .

Oliva was born on July 25, 1898, in Terrazini, Sicily, and died on August 7, 1966, at age 68. . . . Unlike Vito's parents, hers were married, and she was the youngest of 16 children. . . . Oliva was a very devout young woman who went to mass daily and wanted to be a nun when she grew up. . . . When she was 13, her family came to America. They settled in Detroit. . . .

They [Vito and Oliva] started life together on November 30, 1918. . . . The beginning years were very rough. There was no money. What money they had, Vito would sometimes gamble . . . and return home with nothing. . . . She supported him emotionally through those difficult times.

When they had been married about 10 years, they were introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ. Because of his childhood and early experiences with the church in which he was raised, Vito was turned off

by religion. Somehow though these people got his attention, and when he was 36, he knelt down and prayed for the first time in his life. This was not an easy thing for him to do, but he was missing something in his life, and he was searching for it. Oliva had not lost her faith in God, but she somehow understood why Vito felt the way he did. When she began to read the Bible through, she started to question her religion. Even though Vito and Oliva began attending this new Church together, it was Oliva who became converted first. So on November 10, 1929, at the age of 31, she was baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ. This made Vito very angry that she should make such a major decision without him, and he threatened to leave her and, in fact, did. Oliva ran after him begging him to come back, which he did [a short time later]. On January 26, 1930, Vito was baptized. This single event changed our family's legacy. [He became an elder about four years later.]

Vito now found what he was looking for. He found a home, a resting place, a rock. He found God. He quit smoking, drinking, and being the life of the party. He didn't lose his sense of humor though, because we all remember that. To his dying day he lived a Christian life, practicing what he preached.

Four members of Sister Oliva's extended family were baptized: her mother, Francesca Napolitano; her sisters, Rose Daleo and Sarah Emilio; and her brother, Jack Napolitano. The Ausilios had eight children, six of whom were baptized: Sisters Lena (Antoinette) Pontillo, the late Frances C. Capone, Almerinda Kaczmarek, Olivia Parravano, Brothers Anthony and the late David Ausilio. They have passed this great heritage of the Gospel of Jesus Christ onto their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, several of whom are in the Church today.



Peter H., Frances Capone and Olivia Parravano, Brother Pete's Baptism, circa 1950

A Mission Begins

Due to the crowded conditions in Branch #1 and the inconvenience of the brothers and sisters from the lower east side traveling great distances, a motion was passed to open a mission in the vicinity of Chene Street. A building was found at the corner of McDougall and Gratiot Avenues. The rent was \$25 per month.

Brother Patsy DiBattista was appointed to preside over the East Side Mission and Brother Joseph Corrado was to assist him. A motion was passed that Van Dyke Avenue be the approximate dividing line between the East Side Mission and the Detroit Branch. (Detroit Branch Minutes, November 18, 1933)

At their first meeting on November 26, Paul Vitto requested baptism, with Lena Pontillo, Frances Cece and Connie Meo following him into the waters two weeks later on December 10. The mission had four elders, Brothers Patsy DiBattista, Joe Giansante, Joe Corrado, and Anthony Ruzzi.



Church Gathering in 1940: Nancy Conti, Rose Piacentino, Frances (Campo) Cece, Eleanor Piersante, Mary (Piersanti) Criscuolo, Theresa (Conti) Piacentino, Mike Piacentino, Jack Pontillo (head shown), Patsy DiBattista, and Albert Piersante

Organized As Detroit, Branch #3

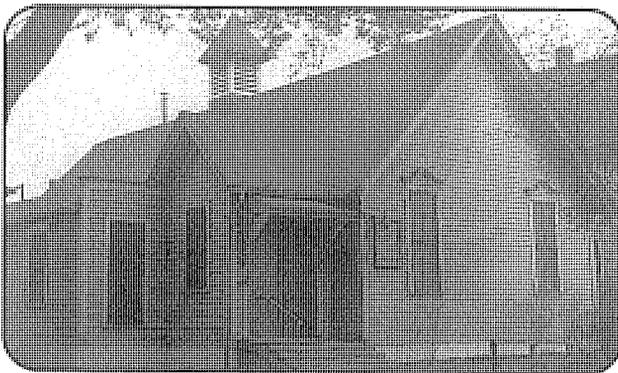
With a growing membership in the mission, Brother William Cadman wrote of the July 1935 General Church Conference in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, that:

A resolution was passed . . . authorizing a Branch to be organized at the East Side Mission, Detroit, with Brother Pasquale DiBattista as Presiding Elder. This makes the third Branch to be organized in Detroit, and they will be known as Branch #1, #2, and #3. (Cadman History, p. 230.)

On July 13, following the conference, the Branch was officially organized with Brothers Silverio Criscuolo appointed first counselor and Tony Ruzzi as the second counselor. Again the progress of Branch #3 would bring an encouraging report to the January 1937 General Church Conference held at Youngstown, Ohio, where the minutes would show that:

Branch #3 of Detroit, Michigan reported that they had an opportunity to buy a Church building at an approximate cost of \$3,000. They also reported they had raised \$2,400 towards purchasing it. The Conference authorized them to make the deal. (Cadman History, p. 254)

But it was a year later before Branch #3 could report the actual purchase of their Church building. Located at 3156 Arndt Street, the dedi-

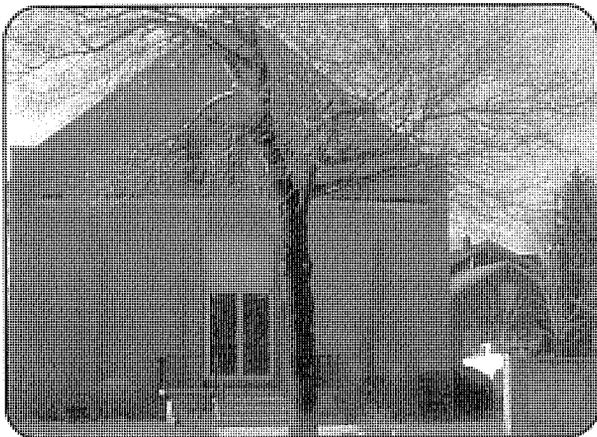


Detroit Branch #3 Church Building on Arndt Street

cation of the new facility—their first Church building—was held on May 1, 1938. And, once again, as a confirmation of God's favor, three souls were called into the fold that day: Domenic Canale, Gennaro Coppa, and Frances Cannavo.

In time, the winds of change would blow across the lives of the saints. During the 1940s, quite a few Branch #3 members moved to the sunny climate of California. Soon after a mission was formed in Los Angeles, which was placed under the jurisdiction of Branch #3 since the Church had not organized into Districts at this time. The Church building on Arndt Street was sold in August of 1946. Fortunately, the members were able to continue meeting in the facility until November, whereupon, the membership determined to meet in the basement of Brother Sam Santilli's home for the Sunday services and either Branch #1 or #2 for the mid-week meetings.

As time passed by, a decision was made to build. Eventually, two lots located in a residential area on Hoyt Street, north of Seven Mile Road and West of Schoenherr Road, were purchased. With the Saints relying upon their own labor, the basement was dug by hand. Unfortunately, when the neighbors learned that a church building was going to be erected on the lots, they protested. Though legally in the right, the Church capitulated in order to keep the peace, thus avoiding court proceedings.



Detroit Branch #3 Church Building on Seven Mile Road near Schoenherr Road



Branch #3, 1953: Top row: Harriet (D'Amico) Francione, Mary Vitto (Sun. Sch. Teacher);
 Next row: Unknown, Joe Campagna, Unknown; Next row: Sam Randazzo, Joe
 Piacentino; Bottom row: Jim Campagna, Ron Vitto and Olivia (Ausilio) Parravano

The lots on Hoyt were then sold and other lots purchased on Seven Mile Road, west of Schoenherr Road. Upon this acquisition, the Branch decided to use the same building plans as Branch #4. The building was dedicated on November 7th 1949. Sister Frances I. Capone writes:

The Church building is a well-built structure and is simple in taste. It seats about 200 people. On the morning of the dedication, there were more than 400 people present; the Church was filled to capacity and overflowing. Many had to stand.

It was with a great feeling of exaltation that many of us walked up the steps of the building. This structure represented hours of toil and anxiety for many of us, but at last, the much-awaited moment was here. The flag in front of the building spoke volumes as it waved in the morning breeze. Yes, with the help of God, we had built a Church. Our hearts were filled to an overflowing that pen and ink can never explain.

By his eloquent words and presence, Brother William H. Cadman would honor this occasion, stating:

I praise God for making this structure possible, and we give all due reverence to the House of God, but we must remember that it, too, will crumble away to dust. Only true service to the Holy Spirit will endure permanently. Serving God will bring the pleasure and care of God, but transgressing His laws will bring retribution and sorrow to the transgressor. (*The Gospel News*, December 1949, pp. 2-3)

What would be characteristic by now of special occasions, for the Branch #3 saints, the Lord would favor this situation with the baptism of Sister Rose Amormino.

NORTH SIDE MISSION (BRANCH #4)

Organization of the Mission

The Gospel story would continue in its eastward, westward, and now northward spread across the face of the city of Detroit. In the early 1930s, for most of the membership, the established works of the region were community churches, still within walking distance of the saints' homes. But for the 18 plus members living northward in the direction of Highland Park traveling the 15 or more miles to the Detroit Branch became a weekly hardship. Brother Dominic Moraco states:

The Great Depression was at its height and only a few of the poverty-stricken saints had any means of transportation or the finances needed to make the long weekly trips to Branch #1. Moreover, they had no meeting place on the north side, and even worse, they had no elder to minister to their needs.

The resourceful saints refused to be discouraged. They banded together and asked Branch #1 to appoint an elder to conduct services in a store building on Oakland Avenue in the Highland Park area, which they rented for that purpose.

Just one month after organizing the West Side Mission into a branch, and one year after establishing the East Side as a mission, Brother Thurman Furnier, as Detroit Branch Presiding Elder, was once again taking action to accommodate the rapid growth in membership. This time, it was to establish the North Side Mission for the Highland Park area. On November 12, 1934, the Highland Park members and Brother Furnier met in the home of Brother Dominic Castelli. The 16 or so members present resolved overwhelmingly in favor of having their own mission of the Church. They decided to look for a meeting site. The Mission was organized on Wednesday, November 28th. Noteworthy of this meeting were the callings of Brother Dominic and Sister Jennie Castelli to the offices of deacon and deaconess.

Sister Anna Frammolino was borrowed from the Detroit Branch for the first Sunday; the group needed a Deaconess to participate in the ordination of Sister Castelli. Brother Furnier had looked to Brother Guiseppe Giansante to take charge over the mission's first meeting on December 2, 1934. His presiding over this small flock would extend through the next year and a half until June of 1936.

The Oakland Avenue Building

For \$18.00 a month, the saints met in a small, rented store nestled in the middle of the block, in a building used for commercial purposes. Located on Oakland Avenue just south of Highland Park and within walking distance of the saints' homes, it was no different than the many other small stores of that day, having no windows but only a front door entrance. Because the door was the only source for open air, the store-room could become unbearably hot during the summer months. At times, it would not be uncommon to see the saints overwhelmed by the heat.

The Love of a Friend

Joseph Batalucco's and Joseph Lombardo's friendship began when they worked together at the Ford Motor Company in Highland Park. By the

mid-1920s both were married, and about that time, Joe Lombardo brought his new wife, Sarah, from Saginaw to a home in Highland Park. Yet, because of Sarah's loneliness for her family in Saginaw, Joe Lombardo asked his friend, Joe Batalucco, and his young family to live with them. Not only would the boarders remedy Sarah's homesickness but the shared living expenses for both families would ease their financial burdens.

Shortly thereafter, Joe Lombardo began attending a nearby Italian Baptist Church. His friendship with Joe Batalucco had drawn him to attend as well. By conveniently leaving his opened Bible around the house, Lombardo knew that Batalucco would end up reading from it since he was an avid reader. He usually planted his bait before his day shift began.

Eventually, both couples were baptized into the Baptist Church where they befriended the Conigliaros, Joseph and Josephine. In time, however, the Baptist Church they had been attending became disorganized after their minister left. Joe Batalucco, becoming dissatisfied with the church's tenets, began visiting other churches. The Lombardos ended up moving back to Saginaw, and the Bataluccos moved into their own home on Manor Street. While this was happening, the Conigliaros were introduced to the Church by their neighbors, the Ciaravinos.

Once baptized, Joe Conigliaro sought out his friend, Joe Batalucco, in the winter of 1935 to tell him of the wonderful Church he had joined. Although Joe Batalucco did attend the North Side Mission and the Detroit Branch, he persisted in investigating several other faiths, all of this by way of the streetcar. In time, he concluded that The Church of Jesus Christ was the only church which followed all of the precepts as laid down by Jesus Christ. Brother Vito Ausilio had also picked up the Bataluccos, now with four children, to take them to the McDougall Mission; but, when Joe purchased a car, he was able to regularly attend the North Side Mission.

One night, in an overwhelming experience, Joe Batalucco was convinced of the next step that would have to be taken. Seeing Brother Matthew Miller in a dream, Joe heard the voice of Jesus beckoning, "Come to Me, come to Me." Overcome with emotion, Joe shook in his bed to such an extent that his wife Marion was awakened.

The following Sunday, Brother Matthew Miller attended the Mission. What was strange was that Brother Miller had visited the Mission just the week before; and, although he had a routine of visiting the area's missions, it was always with four weeks or so between such visits. Joe Batalucco saw Brother Miller's repeat visit as a confirmation to be baptized, entering into the waters of regeneration on June 16, 1935, with Brother Matthew baptizing him. His wife, Marion, followed him two weeks later on June 30th, along with Marie Fera. Because the young Mission still had no deaconess at that time, Sister Anna Frammolino, once again, was called upon to assist in the baptisms of the new sisters. Brother V. James Lovalvo, being the only elder there that Sunday had baptized and confirmed them both. (*The Gospel News*, October 1985, p. 2)

The tables would reverse. The Bataluccos, along with the Conigliaros would now give their testimonies to the Lombardos in hopes of attracting them to the Restored Gospel. After a few visits to Saginaw and return trips with the Lombardos staying at the Bataluccos' and Conigliaros' homes, Joe and Sarah came to know and accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Eventually, they were baptized.

In July 1936, Branch #1 appointed Brother V. James Lovalvo the presiding elder of the North Side Mission. The growth of the mission had been rapid from its beginnings, allowing them to apply for branch status by July of 1938 with a membership of about 40. The branch became known as Detroit Branch #4, being the fourth branch organized within the City of Detroit.

Organization of the Branch

The branch was organized on Saturday, July 9, 1938. Brother V. James Lovalvo would continue as presiding elder with Brothers Gorie Ciaravino as first counselor and Dominic Castelli as second counselor, respectively.

The branch started with a missionary assignment in Saginaw. A motion was passed that the branch assumes the responsibility of holding meetings from time to time in the Lombardos' home.

The Conigliaro Basement

The start of the next decade found itself at the end of the Depression, yet still within its grip. Although the new branch enjoyed a fair number of members, making monthly rent payments became a financial strain. To alleviate this burden, Brother Conigliaro offered the use of his basement, just three blocks away from the rented storefront for Church services. In return, the branch provided some financial assistance, allowing the Conigliaros to refurbish their basement into a suitable meeting area.



Josephina and Joseph Conigliaro

Hamilton Avenue

Brother Dominic Moraco referred to the storefront on Hamilton Avenue, still in Highland Park, as a "place of many blessings." Here the saints met from the dedication Sunday on February 25, 1945 through much of 1946.

West Chicago Boulevard

In hopes of erecting a church building, two city lots were purchased on West Chicago on September 25, 1945 for \$300.00. Saving for the building project, the saints could no longer rent the storefront for services. Although the M.B.A. meetings could be held in the home of Brother Conselato and Sister Catherine Benedetto on a weeknight, the home proved to be too small for Sunday services. Branch #4 looked to

its neighboring Branch #2 for permission to meet with them on South Electric Street on Sundays until the construction of their Church building was completed.

Brother Dominic Moraco:

Years later, the members of Branch #2 were compelled to sell their building and meet with Branch #4 for several months. This created a very close bond between the two Branches, which lingers to the present time.

The San Diego Mission

In the process of constructing a church building in Northwest Detroit, a mission sprang up in Southern California under the jurisdiction of none other than Branch #4. World War II had brought an end to the Great Depression. The country's factories began turning out staggering numbers of weapons, aircrafts, tanks, and ships. From coast to coast, the increased production meant more work at better wages. And with these prospects, many took the opportunity to relocate to the sunnier climates.

With a branch membership at an all-time high of 85, several members during 1944 would begin what would eventually become a rather large exodus to San Diego, California. In 1945, the transplanted members appealed to the Church requesting that a mission be established. Consisting mostly of Branch #4 members, the San Diego Mission was organized on July 13, 1945; thus, it was placed under the jurisdiction of Branch #4. While Brother Gorie Ciaravino would never leave Detroit, he was appointed the mission's first presiding elder, presiding from clear across the country.

Just as the saints of Branch #4 began to break ground in Detroit for their first church building in April of 1947, 25 additional members departed for San Diego, leaving the Branch with a much smaller membership and the huge project of erecting a meeting house. The San Diego Mission status remained until they acquired sufficient resident ministry and became an established mission in 1947, being placed under the authority of the General Church with Brother Patsy DiBattista in charge.

Within a short time, they organized into a branch and eventually became a part of the California District in 1954. (*The Gospel News*, October 1965, p. 2)

In the Basement

Because of the high postwar prices, the shortages of material, and the depletion in the membership, construction went only as far as the basement. By placing a roof where normally the main floor would be, the Saints were able to begin holding services. Finally, the membership had a building they could call their own, albeit a basement. Nevertheless, the basement would be dedicated to the Honor and Glory of God on Sunday, May 2, 1948 in a service that drew a considerable representation from the area's other branches and missions.

Brother Dominic Moraco

In the late 1940s, another young man emerged to the spiritual forefront of the Branch. Raised in the Ruzzi home, Dominic Moraco had been baptized before he was called to serve his country in the War. Upon his return, he grew to spiritual maturity and on January 18, 1948, was ordained an elder of Branch #4.

Meanwhile, the need to complete the Church building continued to press upon the group, even though they were ill prepared for the task. Brother Jonathan Marinetti, Branch Historian, states:

They went before God in fasting and prayer, and before the close of the meeting, one sister saw a vision of two men dressed in working clothes ready to start working. That was, indeed, very encouraging, as they were not financially prepared for such a venture.

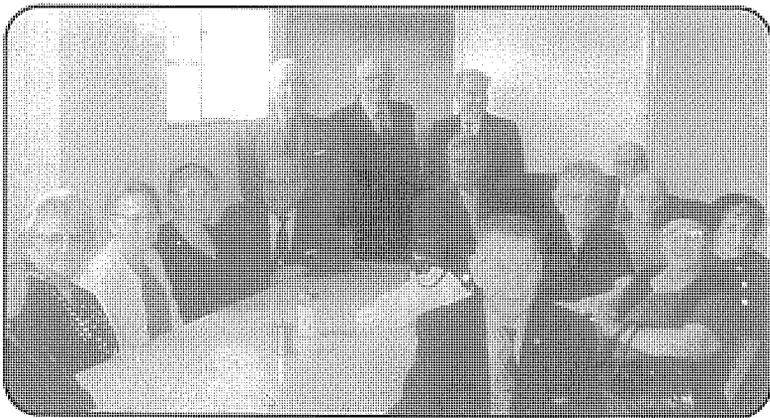
Neither, at times, were the saints physically up to the challenge, especially after putting in long hours during the day in the shops and factories; most of them were inexperienced in construction as well. Brother Emil Carlini, who had been placed in charge of the construction work, met with this frustration. Brother Emil:

In my dream, I was driving on West Chicago Blvd. and before coming to the Church's building site, my car started to go backward instead of forward. The day began to also grow darker by degrees. I thought my car was backing into a dark valley. I started to cry unto the Lord for help. After I called to God, I found myself in front of the Church's building site where I saw the Lord. I cried, "Lord, Lord, Help me."

He replied, "Look at your brothers; they are all sleeping and the work isn't going ahead."

I replied, "Lord, help me and I will help finish the building." I awakened the brothers and started to work on the building. Then I awoke.

Brother Joseph Usai was directed by the Lord to build a pulpit and communion table, although he had lacked experience in this type of work. Yet, by faith and a few tools he had found in his basement, a beautiful



Detroit Branch #4 Saints: (left to right) Jim Acquilino, Gerry Maisano, Concetta Piccolo, Carmela and George Castelli, Anthony Ruzzi, Consolato Benedetto, Carlo Saragosa, Anthony LaCivita, Florence Lombardo, Gaetano Gerace, Frances Gerace, Anna Frammolino (Detroit Branch #1), Rose Morello, and Tony Fiore (in front)

finished product ensued. Years later, when the Branch relocated, the pulpit and table were given to the Muncey Mission for use. And later yet, they were used in the Mexico Town Mission of the Detroit Inner City Branch.

The saints pulled together and along the way unexpected donations of money were received which miraculously allowed the building to be completed debt free. Finally, the saints were able to have their long awaited and much appreciated church (as Brother Marinetti put it), "through God's tender mercies and loving kindness." This made for a second dedication. That day, August 16, 1953, the Lord confirmed His pleasure by visions, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

THE WINDSOR BRANCH HISTORY

(The material for this history was obtained from Ilene Collison Smith, Etta and Allen Henderson, Leata Ford, Otto and Dorothy Henderson, Robert A. and Sarah Watson and also from Michigan History. It was compiled by Olive Elzby, Elaine Jordan and Bob Stanek and Kerry Carlini.)

The work in Windsor began in 1932 and great have been the blessings, as also have been the trials and tribulations of this little branch.

When Joseph Smith petitioned the Lord concerning which church he should go to, he tells that when he knelt to pray he was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame him, and it seemed for a time as if he were doomed to sudden destruction. By exerting all his inward strength to call upon God to deliver him out of the power of his enemy which had seized upon him, and at the very moment he was ready to sink to despair and abandon himself to destruction, he saw a pillar of light exactly over his head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon him. It no sooner appeared that he found himself delivered from the enemy, which held him bound. The light

rested upon a personage whose glory was beyond expression, and a voice spoke unto him saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him."

Thus we see that through the Restoration of the Gospel, light and darkness were divided as at the beginning, at the time of the creation. It is sometimes through tragedy the Lord moves in a mysterious and miraculous way in performing His work. Such was the case with the Gerace family that ultimately opened the way for the Church to be established in Windsor.

During the Great Depression in the early 1930s, Gaetano Gerace and his brother, who lived in Windsor, went into partnership and they tried to build up a grocery store. One day, Gaetano's eldest son, who was sixteen and a half years old, was going to visit his aunt in Detroit. While on the way, he was struck with an apparent heart attack and died instantly. It was a traumatic experience for the whole family. The day the realization struck Gaetano's wife, Frances, that she had lost her first-born son, a pain pierced her heart. She was alone in the store and she screamed out, "How could God be so cruel? There is no God!"

She ran into the kitchen, which was in the back of the store, and suddenly it seemed that the whole world stood still. She saw a blue cloud by her side and out of the cloud came one arm that wrapped around her shoulder and the other arm came in front of her. A voice spoke out of the cloud and said, "Look! Death is not the end of all things, it is only the beginning." Suddenly, the world began to move again, and the peace that passes all understanding came over her. She said she now knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that there was a God.

Gaetano was heartbroken. He decided to go back to the Catholic Church for comfort. Yet, there, he could not find any relief for his broken heart. At this time, the Geraces lived in Remington Park, which was a rural area. Gaetano, in need of solace, went into a field and cried unto the Lord, feeling within himself that if there was a God in heaven, He would have to answer. This continued for six months. Finally, while he was praying the Lord answered, stating, "If you want to find The Church

of Jesus Christ, go to Devine Street in Detroit, Michigan. The other churches you know of are not mine. . . .”

After this had happened, Gaetano sought reassurance and once again went to the Lord in prayer to determine whether the Lord truly had spoken to him. Again, the Lord answered him, stating the same thing he said before. So, on a Sunday, Gaetano went to Detroit, and took a street-car to Devine Street; however, Gaetano was unsure as to which way to go. At this time a stranger approached him asking, “Are you looking for something?”

Gaetano answered, “I am looking for The Church of Jesus Christ. The stranger then answered, “You are a very fortunate man. I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ,” and he proceeded to direct Gaetano to the Detroit Branch on Devine Street. Suddenly, this stranger was gone from Gaetano’s presence. Gaetano enjoyed a beautiful spirit of peace during the service that day.

Following the meeting, a sister of the Church approached him and said that through an experience given her by the Lord in a dream the night before, she was told that the Apostle John had directed Gaetano to the meeting that day. Brother Carmine Campitelle baptized Brother Gaetano on October 30, 1932. He proceeded to travel back and forth from Windsor to Detroit for services, as well as meet with an American Indian, Sister Weiner, who resided in Windsor, but who was from the Muncey Reserve.

In the summer of 1934, Brother Gaetano met Ross Collison in Windsor and proceeded to give his testimony. Ross followed Brother Gaetano’s advice and petitioned the Lord regarding the authenticity of the Gospel. A glorious experience followed, depicting the authority and purity of The Church of Jesus Christ as contrasted with the other churches.

Brother Ross stated (as recalled by his son, Brother Don):

I was reared in the Church of England, christened and confirmed by the church, thus becoming a member, and enjoyed many sermons pertaining to the prophets and apostles of old, but never giving a thought of ever finding favor of the Eternal God through Christ or becoming a

servant of His unto my fellow men. In the year of 1934, when I was 40 years of age, during one of the greatest depressions in my life, I sought refuge with God. I had always believed there was a living God, but during my life had disobeyed the Commandments; therefore, being a sinner, I cried unto Him with a broken heart and contrite spirit, and, in my repentance, asked about my sister who was also a member of the Church of England before she passed from this life.

The same evening I looked up at the moon. It was full and bright, and I felt a great power consuming my body. At this time, the roof of the house did not block my view of the heavens and I saw an angel traveling at an enormous speed from the East to the moon which was in the West, and then straight down to where I was seated. This angel was all light and power, and this light and power came from him and filled me as well. I said to him, "I do not want to stay here any longer. I want to go back with you." But he raised his hand and pointed to the moon. I looked and beheld a man sprinkling water on a child's head, which ordinance I was quite familiar with in the Church of England.

After this, they disappeared in the darkness away from the moon. I was shown two officers of the law, a white pig, and a lamb (standing between), and the moon at their feet. Then my sister, of whom I spoke during my repentance, was raised, casket and all, and placed before these three great powers. I saw the Lamb cast out the pig into outer darkness because man had been deceived by the pig by changing the ordinances and breaking the everlasting covenant, thus bringing my sister under subjection of the law.

After the pig was driven out, I saw a river of pure water flowing from the Lamb and baptisms being performed in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. When I saw this, I asked them to baptize me also. The fire and the Holy Ghost came down from heaven and my body seemed to be consumed with fire. I was then given power to perform ordinances and preach the Everlasting Gospel, showing judgment unto the Gentiles and fulfilling the promises of Israel.

Ross became convinced of the truth of the Church and was baptized, making him the first Gentile baptized in Canada. Shortly thereafter, church services were conducted in the Collison home with Brother Thurman Furnier presiding. Brother Ross' daughter, Sister Ilene Smith, relates the following:

Within a short time, my mother followed (in baptism). Then Sister Frances Gerace was baptized. I was open and convinced through my dad's experience that this was what I was looking for and started to pray and read the scriptures, asking God to forgive my sins and prepare me for baptism.

During my first meeting, (September 1934) the Spirit spoke to me and said, "This is your first and last opportunity." When I arose to my feet that day, they were preaching, "Today is the day of salvation." Brother John Ward said he hadn't felt such spirit and power in one asking for baptism—how could they refuse me?

Brother Ross eventually became the first to be ordained a minister in Windsor.

Sister Ilene (Collison) Smith writes:

We were so happy in coming into the Church and realizing we were serving a living God who hears and answers prayer. For the first time in our life, we had family worship. We sang hymns, prayed and read the scriptures together in our home. One night, I remembered I was so concerned about my Dad asking me to pray that I took it to the Lord in prayer. That night, a prayer was given to me that was so wonderful and I thought if I could only pray like that when I was called to pray. The following night I was asked to pray and word for word it came to me again. Nothing was said, but I remember my mother and dad looking at one another in amazement when we rose to our feet. The Gerace family and our family met often through the week and a bond was knit together that we hope shall never be broken.

On Sundays, we looked forward to being with our brothers and sisters from Detroit, and they never failed us. . . .

We remember looking forward to the brothers and sisters returning from Muncey (and Grand River), to hear of their experiences among the Indian people. It was depression time, yet my mother always managed to have something prepared for them.

[Sister Ilene has remained faithful in the Church to this day. Currently, she and her husband, Brother Chuck, are involved in the Church's missionary activities in Independence, Missouri.]

Brother Tony Gerace, the son of Gaetano, writes:

(At this time) Brother Thurman Furnier was in charge of the mission in Windsor. His brother-in-law, Brother Wade Riggen, would come with him from time to time. Brother Wade Riggen was one of the great speakers of the Church. When he spoke, the congregation would be filled with the Spirit. He was truly an extraordinary speaker. Yet, as the years went by, he slipped away from the Church and was lost.

As a young boy, I remember sitting in some of those meetings. The Spirit of God was so strong that it seemed like a wave passing over the congregation. The small group that gathered together in those days was truly knit together as one family, the family of God. It was hard to find a group that was more closely united. Even after the meetings, they would gather together in one another's homes. Their lives were so intertwined that they were truly one people. Some of the spiritual experiences that they had from time to time were absolutely amazing. The Lord put them in the palm of His hands and made the impossible possible.

This would also be the beginning of Brother Joe Loalvo's involvement of the Windsor Work. He would later write:

In the year 1935 . . . I attended the services there along with other brothers and sisters who went there from Detroit to encourage those who had obeyed the Gospel. In the same year, I was ordained a teacher and was sent to Windsor to conduct services by the request of the Presiding Elder of Branch #1, of Detroit, Brother T. S. Furnier. In January 1936, I was ordained an elder and continued with other elders to preach the Gospel in the City of Windsor. (Cadman History, p. 290)

Brother Mark Randy shares:

Brother Thurman Furnier involved us Joe and Jim Loalvo, and myself and kept us active. As teachers, we were sent to Windsor, Canada, where a mission was flourishing.

Native American Work Leads to Harvest Amongst the Gentiles

During the fall of 1936, Brothers Matthew Miller and Wade Riggen, ministers from Detroit, crossed the border to Canada, to preach the Gospel to the American Indians in the Muncey Mission. Mr. Frank Ford

was an immigration officer working at the Ferry Docks where the boats landed in Windsor, bringing passengers and cars from the United States into Canada. He became suspicious of these men who called themselves ministers of The Church of Jesus Christ.

When he would question them as to where they were going and what they were doing in Canada, they would always tell him they were going to Muncey to preach the Gospel. He would ask them who paid them for their services. He was told that members of the Church in Detroit would take their own cars and the General Church paid for the gasoline and the ministers donated their services free. Frank Ford was not interested in their Church, for he was a Baptist. He thought they were taking money from the Indian people, which would be against the law in Canada, which he was paid to protect. He told some members of the Baptist Church about his suspicions regarding these men, and that he planned to make a trip to Muncey and find out what they were doing there. This went on for about two years and he became acquainted with Brother Miller and some of his traveling companions. One Sunday morning Brother Miller had a chance to talk to Frank Ford for a few minutes and he asked him whether he would like to make the trip with them some Sunday morning.

Frank Ford said, "I would like to. Could I bring a friend?" Brother Miller said, "Bring as many as you want." This was the chance Frank was waiting for. Brother Miller said, "How about next Sunday?" Plans were made to meet in front of Robert Watson's home on Howard Avenue. When the ministers from Detroit arrived that morning, it was raining and freezing. The road was very slippery, so Cliff Burgess said to the ministers, "Do you not think we would be tempting God to drive on such slippery roads?" Brother Miller answered, "If God is with us who can be against us?" They made the trip without any trouble.

Frank Ford and Cliff Burgess were looking for faults when they gathered in the meeting. There were a number of Indian people there and the Spirit of God was manifested when they began to testify and tell what God had done for them. Frank and Cliff began to feel something they

had never experienced before. They were especially moved by the words of old Sister Muskellunge. She testified that a year prior she had been taken into the Thames River and baptized. She had been blind for 15 years and miraculously she received her sight the moment she came out of the waters. She could see to thread a needle. Frank also discovered that instead of taking money from them the brothers were actually bringing food to distribute to the needy on the Reserve.

On the return trip home, they asked, "Do you believe that story is true about that woman receiving her eyesight?" Brother Miller answered, "I am the minister who baptized her."

Mr. Ford and Mr. Burgess began to tell what they had seen and heard and all they could say was that there is nothing like that in the Baptist Church. They said that they had arranged with Brothers Miller and Riggen to come over on Tuesday night to visit a blind man whom they knew in the Baptist Church and, if any one would like to go, they would be welcome.

Mr. Ford, Mr. Burgess, Mr. Henderson, Flossie Nuttall, and Brothers Miller and Riggen paid a visit to the home of this blind man.

They were made welcome and had prayer together. Then they told him about the Church and how God did heal through anointing with oil. He was asked whether he would like to be anointed, and they anointed him.

The following Sunday afternoon they held a service in this blind man's home. Many from the Church in Detroit attended, as well as several from the Baptist Church in Windsor. It was an outstanding meeting, with the blessings of God evident.



Frank Ford

Experience of Frank Ford

Some of the Baptist people began to believe and wanted to hear more. Arrangements were made to have some meetings in their homes. They began to have dreams and revelations. Mr. Ford had a dream in which he found himself standing at the ferry dock where he worked as an immigration officer. He looked up the river and saw a beautiful white ship with golden railings. It was shining in the sunlight, and as he looked at it, he saw that it was pulling in toward the dock in Windsor, as if it were going to dock. He knew that it was a strange ship. He turned to an officer standing beside him and asked him, "What ship is this?" The officer replied, "This is the Gospel Ship of Zion and it is going to tie up in Windsor!" The Gospel Ship of Zion had four columns and each column had a separate letter that made the word, LOVE. They soon began to hold meetings every Tuesday night.

Experience of Robert M. Watson

Robert M. Watson had been attending a Bible study in the Baptist Church that included the Fords, Hendersons, Burgesses and others. Leata Ford, a Bible student at the time, discussed the need for the reception of the Holy Ghost to be conferred upon converts, and Robert began to desire this special gift. He was a sincere man and went to his minister at the time to inquire about how to receive it. His pastor stated that the ordinance of bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost was only for the followers of Jesus Christ in the early Apostolic Church. This answer did not satisfy him.

Robert began to investigate the faith and doctrine of other denominations, asking whether they believed in the Gift of the Holy Ghost. One of the churches invited him to attend one of their services, saying that they could help him receive this gift. They took him to a back room, separate from the congregation, and asked him to put up his arms and repeat the word "Hallelujah" over and over. He began to feel like he was losing control and was afraid of the spirit he was experiencing, so he left this church in confusion and disappointment. When he began attending

The Church of Jesus Christ, he was very impressed with the gentle spirit and the power of God that was evident in their meeting. He was especially impressed with a church service he attended on the Muncey Indian Reservation.

He prayed very hard for God to show him whether he should join this little group, and shortly thereafter received a dream. He saw a stream with stepping-stones leading to a little Church building on the other side. The Church was beautiful and it had a strong and solid foundation. In the dream he was told that if he went to this little Church he would receive the Holy Ghost. The stepping-stones to the Church were also significant, because he knew that one of them was The Book of Mormon, which up to that point had been instead a stumbling block to him.

Experience of Allen Henderson

After returning home from a General Church Conference, Allen Henderson decided to ask God where His Church was. After awakening in the morning, he quickly got up and told his wife, "I had a dream last night and I saw a hand writing on the wall, 'Read



Clifford and May Burgess, Nancy and Robert M. Watson, Etta and Allen Henderson

Haggai." He took his Bible and found that Haggai was a book in the Bible. He began to read and when he came to the fifth verse, the Spirit of God came upon him. "Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts. Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Consider your ways." He knew he had to consider his ways, recognizing that the Church he had been attending had not brought fulfillment.

Harvest Time

In April 1937, Frank and Leata Ford were the first of this group of former Baptists to be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ in Windsor, but many of the others soon followed, as Robert M. Watson, Allen and Etta Henderson, and Clifford Burgess were baptized in May; and May Burgess, Nancy Watson, Elizabeth Johnson and two other converts followed in June. In 1938, Sam and Mary Cuomo of Creighton Mines, Ontario were also baptized.

Tony Gerace states:

The group that came from the Baptist church became the pillars of The Church of Jesus Christ. They took hold of the Restored Gospel and gave it all that they had and more. They were a dedicated people. At that time it was said, "If you want a blessing, go to the Windsor Branch."

Those were the years of the Great Depression. People seemed to have a lot of time on their hands because there was no employment and most of their time was spent in the Great Work of the Lord. They were forced to put their trust in God for their basic needs.

Little did anyone realize that out of that first trip by Frank Ford and Clifford Burgess up to Muncey, such a fruitful work would come. Their children and children's children, even to the fourth generation, would eventually embrace the Church, even to the extent that Brother Robert Watson's son, Robert A. Watson, would one day be ordained an apostle.

Evangelist Otto Henderson and His Wife, Dorothy

Brother Otto Henderson, son of Allen Henderson states:

I was twelve years old when my parents met The Church of Jesus Christ. They had come to know there was a living God and became aware of The Book of Mormon, the story of the Restoration and the gathering of Israel.

It was hard times; the Great Depression was still on. My mother thought to help Brother Collison so she sent my brother and me to him with a quarter each to get a haircut. The haircut we got, but the quarter was sent back and Sister Collison gave us something to eat.

One Sunday, my mother was home sick while the family went to church. My father went home at noon to see whether she needed help. She said, "Allen, help me get dressed. I can remember reading how the shadow of Peter fell on the sick and they were healed. I believe today, if the shadow of this ministry fell on me, I would be healed." In the afternoon service, she stood up and gave her testimony in the same words. Brother Joe Lovalvo was caused to stand in the Spirit and say, "Sister Etta, in the Name of Jesus Christ, be thou made whole."

I have seen cancer healed, broken bones knit and prayers answered for every need of life.

I was called by the touch of God's Spirit on a Sunday and I held back. I later was sent overseas and for the first time, I saw the real world—evil, hate and destruction. I was very grateful for the privilege of returning back home. I asked God to call me one more time and He did.

I was baptized on May 16, 1948, and on April 17, 1955, I was ordained an elder. I moved our family to California in 1962 and was called to be an evangelist on November 16, 1969.

Sister Dorothy (Burgess) Henderson states:

January 10, 1937—that was the day my father, Brother Clifford Burgess, and Brother Frank Ford went on that memorable trip to the Muncey Indian Reservation that changed the lives of all the people who left the Baptist Church. I was only nine-years-old at the time, but I remember many of the wonderful experiences which were received, and the excitement we all felt when our new Church was being built. My calling into the Church at the age of 15-years-old was on May 16, 1942. Brother Peter Capone was preaching about Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, Choose ye this day whom you will serve." I had no intention of being baptized that day, but I heard a voice call me by name, "Dorothy, whom do you choose to serve this day." I asked for my baptism and Brother Capone baptized me.

It is now more than fifty years since that day God called me into His Church and I praise his name.

Brother Joseph Lovalvo, who was appointed presiding officer when Windsor became a mission on March 17, 1939, reports on the progress of the work in the First Volume of the Church History:

In the Spring of 1939, Brothers Ford and Burgess were ordained teachers of our Windsor Mission and in the fall of the same year, they were ordained elders. . . . During the July 1940 Conference, the General Church organized the Windsor Mission as a Branch and assigned to us the Indian Missionary work on the Six Nations Reservation at Brantford, Ontario. (Cadman History, p. 292)

Brother Joe Lovalvo was retained as the presiding elder and they reported a total of 30 members when Windsor was organized as a Branch. Within one year's time, Brother Joe was caused to write the following of Windsor's rapid growth:

The work at the Windsor Branch and also that at the Six Nation Reservation, and Creighton Mines, Ontario, is flourishing and we now have a membership of 55. The officers at the time of writing are one apostle, two evangelists, two elders, three teachers, three deacons and three deaconesses. . . . (Cadman History, p. 292)

It is also important to point out that this Windsor congregation was made up of many cultures working together. There was a blend of Italian immigrants, English Canadians, Native Americans, African Americans, and other nationalities joined by the Spirit of God, breaking down the cultural barriers that existed between them. Surely God was at work to help these individuals worship and lend their talents to complete the work of God.

A Place to Worship

It was through the revelation of God, as well as a series of challenges, struggles, and persecutions, that ultimately led to the erection of a place of worship for the Windsor Saints. With just a handful of members in 1934, the Collisons' home was more than adequate for the Church services. In facing an obvious need in 1937 for a more suitable place of worship after the sudden influx of converts from the Baptist Church, the saints secured the use of the Moose Temple. Later they rented an old store building on Pierre Avenue and fixed it up as a meeting place.

A Remarkable Testimony of Conversion

One outstanding experience that occurred while they were meeting in that location happened one evening in January 1937. Brother Joe Loalvo was teaching an MBA class on The Book of Mormon, when they heard a knock at the door, and an elderly lady asked whether she could come in. She stated that the Lord had sent her there. Brother Joe answered, "If the Lord sent you, come in," and invited her to sit down and join them. Mrs. Knight, which they later discovered to be her name, wept through the entire meeting. At the end of the meeting, Brother Joe asked her whether she would like to say something. She said,

I belong here. I was walking on Wyandotte Street praying to God, asking Him, "Where is Your Church?" I have been to so many and have joined a number of them, but I have never found love anywhere. I came to the corner of Pierre Avenue, and a voice spoke to me and said, "Turn left." This occurred three times and the third time I obeyed and came in front of The Church of Jesus Christ.

At first she thought it was a Chinese laundry, with the half-curtains across the front windows with a sign. The voice again spoke to her and said, "This is My Church."

Mrs. Knight then said, once again, "I belong here! When I came in, you all had the same look on your faces, the image of Jesus Christ." The saints showed great love to her. They would pick her up and bring her to every service and take her home. But when they would teach or preach from The Book of Mormon, she became antagonistic. This went on for five or six weeks. In February, 1937, at a Friday MBA service, she confronted Brother Joe Loalvo, pointing her finger in his face and, speaking with a strong voice, said, "Young man, you cannot shove that Book of Mormon down my throat. The Bible is my book and that's the way it's going to be." She was told to pray and ask God to reveal the truth of The Book of Mormon and her need to be baptized by the ministers who have the authority of Christ.

When she went home, she brought these matters before the Lord, fasting and praying from Friday night to Sunday morning. On Sunday

morning, she presented her Bible to God, and asked that, if what Brother Joe was saying was true, to show it to her in the Bible. She let her Bible drop and it fell open to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, where it says, "One God, one faith, one baptism," and immediately a voice spoke to her and said, "That is the baptism that Brother Joe is talking to you about, and The Book of Mormon is a true and sacred record."

We picked her up that Sunday morning and, while the preaching was going on, she stood up and requested to be baptized. Brother Joe, wanting to be sure that her intentions were sincere, pointed out to her the terrible weather conditions outside, as it was snowing and the temperature was close to zero. Mrs. Knight got up and said, "Young man, my soul is in your hands. I'm going all the way with Christ." They broke 12 inches of ice, and Brother Ross Collison baptized Sister Knight. She had suffered with a chronic bronchitis condition for many years. After she was baptized, she was completely healed.

After some years (in 1941), she gradually lost her hearing and was completely deaf. The elders from the Windsor, Ontario Branch took her to an ear specialist, and she was told that there was no hope for her recovery and that not even an operation could help her, which completely devastated her.

At the following Church meeting on Tuesday night, she arose and spoke about her loss of hearing. She said, "If I cannot hear the Word of God spoken by my elder brothers any longer, I want to die." As she said these words, the Spirit of God fell upon Brother Joseph Loyalvo in great power and he said, "In the name of Christ, according to your faith, be ye made whole." Immediately she cried out, "I heard you, I heard you, Brother Joe." She received her hearing and was able to hear well the rest of her life.

Need Grows for House of Worship

They had many trials in that storeroom on Pierre Avenue as the people residing in the apartment above them would attempt to disrupt the meeting by making loud noises, such as hammering the floor, shouting and using the Lord's name in vain, until it became unbearable. The

ministry decided to fast and pray that God would lead them to another location where they could worship Him in peace. They had no money to build, but felt that God would provide a place. In answer to prayer, Sister Etta Henderson had two dreams in early 1940.

The morning following one of her dreams, they were making a trip to Six Nations Indian Reserve to hold services there. Making the trip were Brothers Joseph Loalvo, Frank Ford, Allen Henderson and Sisters Leata Ford and Etta Henderson. After they were out of the city on Highway Two, Sister Etta Henderson asked Brother Ford when he would be getting his vacation. He said the end of June to the first of July. Sister Etta said, "You have work to do," and she related her dream to them. While they were discussing the dream, Brother Ford said he had just finished paying back a \$100 loan to the bank and that he would gladly borrow another hundred dollars to build a Church if it was the Lord's will. When Sister Ford said, "I feel the Spirit of God in this dream," the same Spirit filled Brother Henderson. As he was driving about 50 miles an hour, he raised his right hand and spoke these words, "Thus saith the Lord God of Hosts, these are My words, hear ye them." There was a great blessing felt by all. They knew it was a revelation from God. Brother Henderson was so overcome with the Spirit of God that he could not drive any further. They had to pull over and they commenced to pray and glorify God.

They later discovered a lot for sale on the corner of Irvine and Howard. Brother Ford went to City Hall and found out that the City owned it. Brother Joe Loalvo said, "Brother Frank, go back and offer them \$400." Brother Frank replied, "All right, I will try, but I am sure they will not accept it." Brother Joe said, "If the Lord wants us to build a Church on this lot, they will accept." Brother Ford made the offer and they accepted. They were told that the asking price was \$4,000, which was the amount of back taxes owed on the lot.

The following Monday night, a Branch meeting was called to see whether they could raise enough money to buy the lot. Everyone there

was willing to give everything they had. They raised enough money that night to buy the lot.

Brother Joseph Loyalvo took the dreams to the next conference at the request of the Branch. However, since they only had \$50 in their treasury, he didn't feel to submit them, realizing that the General Church would probably ask how much money the Branch had for construction, so he waited for further developments.

In March 1941, Sister Etta Henderson had a dream in which a voice spoke to her and said, "I told the brothers and sisters in Windsor to build a Church, and because they have not built it, the building will cost you more money." It would be their last chance to build for a while since the war effort was taking all the materials, and already there were restrictions on construction. The same week, Sister Marietta Ruzzi of Detroit had a dream in which a voice spoke to her saying to tell the brothers in Windsor to build and money would come from everywhere.

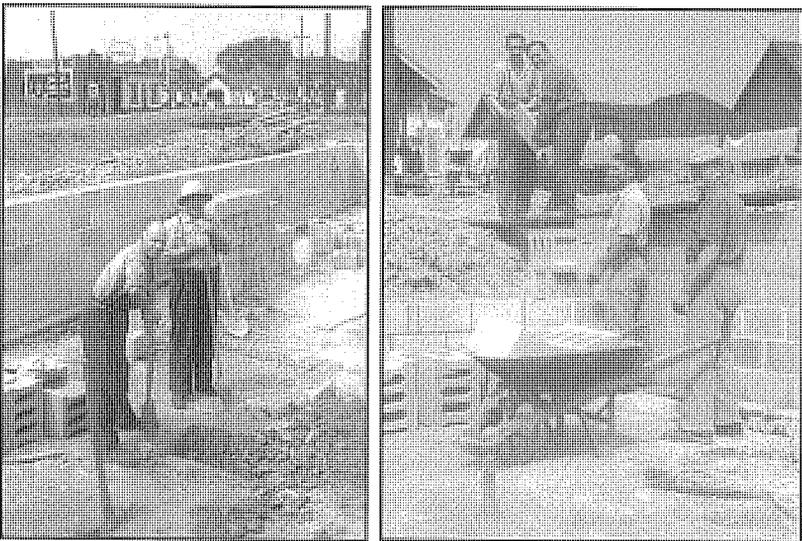
They had to wait until the July Conference to ask for permission to build. Brother William Cadman, the General Church President, recognizing how much the brothers and sisters in Windsor needed a place to worship God in peace, suggested they ask the saints throughout the Church to donate a dollar each to help with the project.

The Windsor brothers and sisters were able to raise over \$1,000, with donations coming in from brothers and sisters throughout the Church, fulfilling the dream of Sister Marietta Ruzzi. Also, during this year, Brothers Allen Henderson and Robert M. Watson were ordained ministers.

By July 1942, they decided to proceed with construction, but they only had sufficient funds for a half-basement. They contacted different contractors for bids, and the lowest price was \$400 for digging a half-basement. One night a man came to Brother Watson's home inquiring about the project, and told him that he could dig a full basement as cheap as a half basement, as he would have more room for his horses to work—his price was \$200. The brothers from the Detroit Branches helped with the construction of the basement.

After the basement was finished, materials were still needed for the upper floor and the money was nearly all spent. They went to the lumberyard to see whether they could buy building materials on credit as well as take a mortgage out on the building. Upon meeting with the owner, they were told he wouldn't give a church lumber on credit. He said he already had two churches falter in paying off their lumber bills and would not take a chance on another one.

The brothers began to tell him about the Church, at which point he stopped them long enough to call all his employees into his office, and then said, "Now tell them what you just told me about this Church, because this is the way a Church should be." Brother Joe preached for over a half-hour about the Church. The owner dismissed the employees and asked the brothers how much lumber they needed. In two days, \$3,600 worth of lumber was delivered and a contract was not signed until three months later. The brothers explained to him that with only ten members they could not afford the monthly payments he was asking.



The Construction of Windsor Branch Building:
left photo: Robert M. Watson, Allen Henderson
right photo includes: Robert A. Watson and Joseph Lovalvo on scaffold



Windsor Church Building on Howard Avenue

He answered, "If you can't pay, don't you worry. I will take care of the shortage."

After this, the work progressed very rapidly, with everybody pitching in. Some used pews were purchased from another church, which had been stored in a barn loft. The pews had to be refinished, and the brothers and sisters worked day and night until everything was done. But when they tried to install them, they worked all morning with no success. The problem was whether there should be one aisle or two aisles. At noon, Brother Ford went home for lunch and told his wife and Sister Henderson what had happened. He said, "Let us pray about it and ask God to show the carpenters how to place the pews." When he went back to the church building, the carpenters had the pews already in place and the foreman said that it was given to him how to arrange them while Brother Ford was home for lunch.

The electrician who had wired the building did not know where the aisles would be when he installed the lights. Amazingly, after the pews were installed, the lights were right over the two aisles!

The building was finished in December 1942. It was dedicated on January 17, 1943 by Brother William H. Cadman.

Brother Joseph Loyalvo was the presiding elder of the Windsor Branch from 1937 to 1945. He never missed a Sunday, Tuesday evening, or Friday evening MBA service. More than once he came across the river from Detroit without enough money to get home. Every time this happened, some brother, by God's direction, would put some money in his hand and say that the Lord said you needed this. Brother Joe never went home on Sunday until he visited every member who was not able to come to Church. Brother Joe's wife, Sister Virginia, supported him in everything he undertook to do.

Remarkable Healings Bless This Branch

Many healings were seen in those years. Sisters Ilene Collison, Leata Ford and May Burgess were all healed of cancer. Brother Robert M. Watson had a heavy metal casing fall on his foot, crushing it and almost severing two toes. This event happened at the same time the Church was having their evening meeting, and the saints left the meeting and went to his home. Brother Burgess anointed his foot and asked God for all there to share his pain. His foot shot out and the pain was gone. His toes were completely healed much to his doctor's amazement.

Leata Ford's Healing

Some time in the early 1940's, Brother Frank Ford's wife, Sister Leata, was diagnosed with cancer—a malignant tumor the size of a grapefruit seed had been discovered in her mouth. A few nights later, many of the members of the Windsor Branch gathered together at the Fords' apartment, located on the second floor of their home (the main floor was occupied by renters). With great concern, the brothers and sisters turned to the Lord as brother Mark Randy began to pray. While Mark was praying, Brothers Robert M. Watson and Lloyd Henderson heard the door to the apartment open and felt a personage pass by them. At this point, Brother Joe Loyalvo felt the power of God, and he commanded the affliction to be removed in the name of Jesus Christ. Shortly there-



Windsor Branch, circa 1951: included in photo are: Bob Ciarrochi, Joe Ciarolla, Betty Alessio, Nancy Watson, Robert and Sarah Watson and children (Brothers Ciarrochi, Ciarolla and Sister Betty Alessio were not members of the Windsor Branch)

after, Sister Leata fell asleep and had a brief dream in which she saw herself descending the stairs of her apartment. Suddenly, she stopped in order to blow her nose and noticed three drops of blood and one seed (the size of a grapefruit seed) in her handkerchief.

The next day, Sister Ford had an appointment with the son of her personal physician, who was a cancer specialist. Just as it happened in the dream, as she and her husband were descending the stairs of their apartment, she had to stop to blow her nose, upon which she noticed three drops of blood and a seed in the center. Later that day, after an extensive examination, the doctor reaffirmed the fact that the original diagnosis of cancer was accurate, but, much to his surprise, not a trace of it remained.

An acquaintance of the Fords, who was a former member of the Church, received the news of Sister Leata's healing with much skepticism. He contacted her doctor in an effort to determine for himself the truth of her claims. The physician responded to his inquiry by saying that, first of all, his policy was to not reveal the details of his patient's conditions but that he would make an exception in this case. He stated emphatically that, indeed, Leata Ford did have a malignant tumor, but that she did not have it any longer; and he had no explanation as to what

happened to it. Much later, when this man was restored to fellowship in the Church, he told the Branch what he had done and asked forgiveness for his unbelief.

Two Experiences of God's Grace

By Sister Sarah Watson

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

It was after World War II and houses available for rent or sale were scarce. We were living with my husband's parents, and although they were very good to us, we were terribly crowded. We had one little girl, and we were expecting another child. We didn't have any money to buy a home and we couldn't find one to rent.

I cried out to God in prayer for him to help us. One day while trying to prepare supper, I was overwhelmed with the desire to reach God in prayer. I remember leaving the potatoes I was peeling in the sink and going to my room to pray. As I knelt down, instead of asking God for a house, I was moved to express my gratitude to Him for His love and goodness towards me. I began to praise Him for what He had done for me in the past, and I told Him how much I loved Him.

Suddenly the room seemed to be illuminated with a light and warmth that spread through my entire body. I knew Jesus Christ was in the room with me. It felt like my room had been transformed into a garden, and Jesus walked slowly towards me. All I could see were His feet and the mantle around them. I could not look up, but cried and said, "Jesus of Nazareth I know You're here, please answer my prayers." At this point I felt a hand over my head, and, at once, I knew He had heard me and was going to answer my requests.

I don't know how long I was in my room, but the feeling of joy lasted for a long time. I did not worry anymore about our needs. That very week my mother called to tell me to look for a house because she had saved \$1,500 to put down on a home, as she knew how badly we needed it.

We fell in love with a little house about a half block from the Windsor Branch, which we were attending at the time. We went to see the owner, but we found out that he wanted a lot more than \$1,500 as a down payment. It was not possible for us to come up with any more money, so our spirits were crushed again.

Then I remembered the experience I had had in my room, and I told my husband that we should go back and see the man again. This time I asked my mother to pray with us. We arrived at his house just as he was coming home from work. He watched as we walked up to him, and then he put his arms around both of us and said, "Come in my children, I have been waiting for you."

We were so surprised and happy with his change of attitude. When we went in the house he told us that after our first visit he had had a dream that very night. In the dream, God spoke to him and asked why he had sent us away? God said, "If they had been your children, would you have sent them away?" He answered, "No, Lord." "They are My children, and they need that house. Give it to them and I will bless you."

The next day he prayed, asking God to send us back to him, promising to give us the house for the money we had. Which is why when he saw us coming, he said, "Come, my children I have been waiting for you." That house turned out to be a wonderful blessing to our family.

The Healing of Our Son

My faith had never really been tested until my little boy, Larry, contracted a virus of the intestines when he was one year old, and he was unable to keep anything in his stomach, vomiting everything he ate. So that he could be fed intravenously, the doctor immediately put Larry into the hospital. We were informed that other babies had already died from this very serious infection. Since this disease was so contagious, he was placed in an isolation ward, and we could only see him through a glass partition. After two weeks of isolation, the doctor gave us permission to take our baby home. We immediately gave him some milk at home and he threw everything up; his digestive system was still very infected.

At this point, Larry became so weak that he was crying day and night. He had lost so much weight that he was just skin and bones. He was unable to lift his head and he became extremely fragile. The Windsor Branch immediately began to pray, as well as our natural family. A week later we called another doctor, Dr. Joe Gerace, whose parents and brother (Tony) were members of our Church. When he came to see Larry, he put our precious baby on the palm of his hand, then, placing his finger on his stomach, he could feel his spine—there was nothing left in his little body.

The doctor told us that he should go back to the hospital, although he did not have much hope for his life. We asked him whether we could keep him home for one more night, because we were afraid that if our son were taken back to the hospital, we would never see him again. My father had told me that I should place him in God's hands for His Will to be done. I found it very difficult to do this and was even angry with him for suggesting it. But I had already decided, prior to the doctor's coming, to fast and pray for as long as necessary for the healing of our son. When the doctor left, my husband, Brother Robert A. Watson, had to go to work on the midnight shift.

My husband's parents, Brother Robert M. and Sister Nancy Watson, after hearing what the doctor had said, became very distraught. Sister Nancy wanted to leave immediately, because she didn't want to see Larry die. I was then left with my two young sleeping daughters, Elaine and Judy, and my dying baby son.

At the midnight hour, I picked up Larry and cradled him in my arms when suddenly, he became stiff, his eyes turned backward, and then he became limp. At this point our neighbor, who had come to check on Larry, screamed and ran out of the house saying, "He's dead, he's dead." I became very frightened, however, the Spirit of God completely consumed me. With all the strength I had, I lifted my son as high as I could and offered him up to the Lord, crying out, "My God, You gave me this son, if You gave him to me to break my heart, and you want him back, then take him now. But if You gave him to me that he might be a joy to our family and to Your Church, then heal him. Heal him now in the name of Jesus Christ."

I then heard my little daughter, Elaine; cry out, "No, you can't have him back." Both she and her sister, Judy, were crying because they had wanted a brother, so I put Larry back into his crib and went to comfort my daughters. I then took some soiled clothes down to the basement to wash. I no sooner got to the basement than I heard some noise up above. I immediately ran up the stairs and saw my father-in-law praising and glorifying God with a loud voice, saying, "It's a miracle! Praise God!! It's a miracle!" It was then that I saw my little boy, who had been barely alive only a moment ago and who for days hadn't even had the strength to raise his head, now, standing up in the crib and actually shaking it for all he was worth. He was crying because he was hungry and he wanted his Mama. My father-in-law, who had apparently heard the prayer I had offered up earlier, had slipped into Larry's room while I had gone down to the basement and had found Larry shaking his crib.

Larry had not spoken a word since he got sick. My father-in-law said, "God has healed your son, Sarah; feed him, he's hungry." I stood there not believing what I saw. Yet, I felt I should follow my father-in-law's counsel. I asked what I should give him, because he had not eaten anything for several weeks except for tea and ginger ale; and he suggested I give him regular milk. I then warmed four ounces of milk, which he eagerly drank and then cried for more. I gave him four more ounces of milk, and then gave him some baby cereal as well. Up to this point, my father-in-law had been holding him, and he said, "Call him by name, Sarah," which I did. Larry then looked up at me and said, "Mama", lifting his arms out to me. As I took him into my arms, the realization that God had decided to give me back my son had finally reached my heart, and I began to cry and thank God. At this point, my husband walked through the door and he began to praise God. Upon hearing all the commotion, our neighbor came back over, fearing the worst. Instead she found Larry eating a piece of toast. She immediately fell on her knees and said, "God has performed a miracle. I am a witness, as long as I live, I am a witness to this miracle." It wasn't long before he began to regain his weight and strength and become an active little boy as he was before.

Today, as I write this testimony, nearly 50 years later, our son, Larry, is now an evangelist in The Church of Jesus Christ, and we are still praising God for the miracle that the Lord performed on our son.

Postscript--Sister Sarah's daughter, Elaine and her husband Dwayne Jordan, her granddaughter Wendy and her husband Todd Heinz had a desire to stop in Windsor on their way to the Native American Conference in Muncey in order to rediscover their Canadian roots. The date was July 19, 2002, just days before this volume was scheduled to go to print. They followed the directions given them by Sister Sarah to the neighborhood where the Watson family used to live, which also happens to be a few blocks from the Windsor Branch. Unsure of the exact location of their old home, or for that matter, whether it was even still standing, they stopped the car to get out and take a closer look. It just so happened that one of the neighbors was looking out the window, so Dwayne went to ask if he knew the Watson family who lived there in the 1940s. Unbelievably, the woman said she remembered them very well--they had lived in the same home for over 60 years! Wendy went up to the house to find

out what they were so excited about. After introductions, she asked the woman, whose name was Edith, if she remembered Larry. Edith proceeded to share her most prominent memory of Larry, when he almost died as a baby. She described, in detail, when Larry was very ill with a stomach virus that many children in the area had died from that year. She also remembered leaving the Watson's home that night so that she wouldn't be there when he died, and, then, coming back the next day only to find him sitting up in his high chair eating everything in sight. Then, fulfilling the promise she had made to Sister Sarah some 54 years previous (referred to in her testimony above), she boldly proclaimed that without a doubt his healing was a miracle. Little did Sister Sarah know at the time, that one day her neighbor would bear witness to her daughter and granddaughter of the wonderful miracle performed that day. Praise God!

THE PORT HURON MISSION

The work in Port Huron, Michigan (60 miles northeast of Detroit) was ultimately an outgrowth of what began as small house meetings in a suburban St. Clair Shores home. During World War II, Brother Mark Randy began to invite his neighbors for Sunday night services to be held in his home. Going from house to house along Little Mack Avenue, he persuaded many of his neighbors of varied religious faiths to attend, thus causing at one point a wall to be knocked out in order to enlarge the chapel area within his home. Explaining the sequence of events, which led to the meetings in Port Huron, Brother Mark writes:

The Townsend Club of Michigan was to meet in Roseville near our home in St. Clair Shores. The leaders were inviting clergies of different faiths, though none of our members belonged to such a club.

At that time, the Methodists asked me to be their speaker. At the conclusion of the meeting, a small group surrounded me. They asked [whether] I cared to come to Port Huron and preach to them, and said they would provide a meeting place for me.

To my surprise, when they finally took me to their meeting place, I said to Mrs. Ann Miller, who owned the hall, "Mrs. Miller, before you accept me you should know what kind of Gospel I preach."

"I hope it is the Restored Gospel," she said. "What do you know about the Restored Gospel?" I answered. "I was once a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ," she replied.

This brought about the beginning of the Port Huron Mission in 1946. Brother Mark continues:

One day, I decided we could do more in Port Huron. I appealed to the city council for permission to hold meetings at beautiful Pine Grove Park every Sunday afternoon: church in the morning and Pine Grove at 2:00 p.m.

These outdoor open meetings would be used time and time again in Port Huron (as well as across the river in Sarnia, Ontario, when that work would start) charming all in attendance under the sound of the Restored Gospel, set to the peace, harmony, and beauty of the Creator's natural surroundings.

Early Radio Experiences

Feeling that more could be done towards the propagating of the Gospel in Port Huron, Brother Mark began to entertain the thought of utilizing the airwaves to aid in his efforts. A few years prior, a previous radio experience had stemmed from the Sunday night meetings held in his home; then, Brother Mark had been invited by some of those in attendance to speak on a radio program. Brother Mark would recall, "This experience gave me self confidence to launch out into the radio program in Port Huron."

"The Gospel Hour"

A determined Brother Mark would proceed. He remembers:

Surprisingly, God moved on some brothers and sisters, particularly the teenage groups of Windsor, Ontario; Lincoln Park, Michigan; and others, not only in providing the singing, but also with money donations. Armed with this, I went to the radio station owner, Mr. Knox. He listened, and then he said, "You will be replacing the Presbyterian Church which gave up for lack of listeners."

Known as “The Gospel Hour,” the Church program would be broadcast live every Sunday morning from 8:30 - 9:00 on station WHLS in Port Huron. With a cost of \$25 per half hour, coverage of a 100-mile radius included parts of Michigan, Ohio and even New York State. (*The Gospel News*, April 1947) Enthusiastically, Brother Mark set about to promote the love of God in the hearts of the listeners. Continuing, he recalls:

Those were glorious days of talking about Jesus, living with Jesus, and sharing Jesus every day of our lives. We were blessed in our homes, in our jobs, and in our churches.

Those from Lincoln Park traveled 90 miles, through snow, rain. . . One Sunday, as these beautiful youngsters sang, I felt such joy in my heart. I called on Margaret Heaps . . . “as you finish this hymn, beginning with yourself, tell the listeners what Jesus has done for you.”

I find it difficult to tell you; those youngsters were so full of love. As they were telling their testimonies to the listeners, the radio phone rang; Mr. Knox was on the phone. “Marco, my son,” he said in a trembling voice, “What do you do to those fine youngsters? They have made me and my wife cry. We are proud to have you on our station.”

These efforts proved to be surprising. Although some converts would initially hear of the Gospel through the program, other more far-reaching effects were noted

Brother Mark went on to say,

We received about \$4,000 from the listeners, though we never asked for money.

Early Converts

Many of the first converts were previously members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ. So it was with Sister Geraldine Knapp. She and a younger woman were baptized in May of 1947. Sister Knapp’s youngest son followed suit later in the year. The Port Huron Mission totaled a membership of five by the year’s end. Filled with a wonderful appreciation for what the Lord had done for her, Sister Geraldine testified of her conversion and some of the blessings she had experienced:

I was a member of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints for nearly 37 years; you will realize it was hard for me to understand and to believe I had to be baptized again. But I prayed faithfully, that if it was necessary, that God would not let me sit in my seat in church until I had asked for baptism. During a meeting I asked them to sing, "Just As I Am," and I could hardly wait until they sang the first verse, when I arose and asked to be baptized. . . .

It (the Gospel) has brought peace and comfort to our hearts who have obeyed it. Many are the sacrifices of our Brother Mark, driving so far twice a week. He never fails us unless it is just impossible for him to come. It makes no difference what the weather is like; he is here. We have . . . Friday nights, and Sunday morning, then preaching, and testimony meeting and the Lord's Supper at 2:30 p.m., and God certainly meets with us in all our meetings. . . .

My heart was filled with so much joy that it seemed to be running over. I was so happy, and I am praying that the rest of my children will also come to the meetings and hear the blessed Gospel, and obey it. . . . I have three grandchildren attending our Sunday School; I teach the Junior Class, and I pray that God will enlighten my mind every day, so that I can teach them all right. . . .

I have had some wonderful dreams since coming into this Church, which have encouraged me to prove faithful. I also have been healed in body, for I went on crutches for over two months, and Brothers Randazzo and Joseph Lovalvo anointed me and I was healed. (*The Gospel News*, January 1948, p. 4; June 1947, p. 8; and December 1947, p. 4)

Through the July 1948 issue of *The Gospel News*, Brother Cadman writes of receiving word from Sister Bertha Ward Sommerville of the Port Huron Mission. Sister Sommerville, daughter of Brother John Ward, told of her husband's baptism in May 1948 following a wonderful meeting. His testimony was "He felt he had been chained, but now the chain was broken."

Church Building in Port Huron

By 1949, rapidly growing membership made it increasingly clear that the saints would have to either obtain a larger building to rent or build their own.

Brother Mark Randy relates:

We began to pray and search for a lot to build our church building. Brother Eldon and Sister Ella Allen were baptized. My wife, Sister Mary, dreamed that someone told her, "There is a lot on 14th Street." We went there and sure enough, there was a large lot for sale.

Soon the construction of the basement of the church building began. The local Port Huron paper, *The Times Herald*, produced a fine write-up of the event. In part, it read:

Cornerstone Laying Ceremonies for New Building:

In spite of a Thanksgiving Day blizzard, a group of loyal parishioners of The Church of Jesus Christ gathered for cornerstone laying ceremonies at the site of the new Church, Fourteenth and Chestnut Streets.

Evangelist Mark Randy, pastor of the Church, conducted the ceremonies. Mr. Randazzo came to Port Huron in November 1946, from Mt. Brydges, Ontario, where he was an Evangelist for The Church of Jesus Christ.

He began holding services here in a building on River Street, and as the congregation grew, it was decided to build a Church to accommodate the followers.

Mr. Randazzo now lives in St. Clair Shores and drives to Port Huron each Sunday to conduct services.

A building fund for the new Church was started in 1947, but much of the building cost will be furnished by other Branches of the Church which are scattered all through the Eastern States and Canada... The Port Huron Church is being built with the aid of members of the congregation who are carpenters, painters or contractors.

It is hoped that the basement of the Port Huron Church will be finished by mid-December so that services may be held there until early spring when the project will be continued." (*The Gospel News*, January 1950, p. 1)

With the Mission falling short of revenue towards the completion of the basement, Brother Cadman summoned the Church, as he had done so many times, through *The Gospel News* forum, asking every member to donate \$1 to help build the Church.

Radio Broadcasts from Sarnia, Ontario

Meanwhile, at the end of 1948, Brother Mark Randy had become aware of the advantages of having the radio broadcast out of the City of Sarnia, Ontario, just across the St. Clair River from Port Huron in Canada. The rates for the Sarnia-based station CHOK were cheaper, costing only \$19.39 per half hour, and the broadcast was stronger, allowing the program to be transmitted within a 500-mile radius, using 5000 watts of power.

On Sunday morning, December 12, 1948, from 10:00-10:30, listeners could tune in on either 1070 AM or 97.7 FM for the first broadcast of "The Gospel Hour" from Sarnia. Opening with its theme song, "Softly and Tenderly," the program was again a live broadcast having brethren from Windsor and Detroit providing the singing with Brother Clifford Burgess as the pianist. Appropriately enough, in taking his text from the Thirteenth Chapter of the Gospel of John, Brother Mark Randy's sermon spoke of God's wonderful love. (*The Gospel News*, January 1949, p. 8)

Branches, through a rotation, regularly supported the program. Along with the inspired sermons of the visiting ministry, the youth benefited much in their participation. Often arriving in carloads, these young saints usually made up the choir and were periodically called upon to bear their testimonies over the air. (*The Gospel News*, April 1949, p. 7)

In the early spring of 1949, a Mrs. L. Gadd of London, Ontario testified that as she listened to the broadcast, "the Spirit of God overshadowed her and witnessed unto her, that that which she heard was true." She quickly acted upon this experience by requesting literature of the Church and, in ultimately becoming convinced of the 'truth,' she was baptized on Sunday, May 29, by Brother Joseph Loyalvo on the Muncey Reserve. (*The Gospel News*, July 1949, p. 1)

Brother Mark Randy summarized the results of the Mission's efforts to attract visitors to the Church by stating:

As a result of our radio program, Brother and Sister Sommerville came. Bertha had been a member of our Church from Pennsylvania;

her husband was baptized. The Johnsons, Jesse and Elsie, were baptized; Fred Bruner and others. As a result of the ad in the paper, Brother and Sister Ralph Brown were baptized, as was Sister Jennie Hannah, a former wife of Otto Fetting's. Also Grace and Edna Crawford, who were former Pentecostal members.

Brother Mark continues to narrate the course of development:

Brother Nick Pietrangelo came to assist in Port Huron, a great boost indeed. Nick and I became as two brothers. Yolanda and my wife, Mary, became as two sisters, a great team. Nick and James Loyalvo took over the radio program as I devoted more time to Sarnia, where a Mission was set in Brother Arthur Maness' home.

Sundays proved long, yet rewarding, with Church services held in Port Huron in the morning, then Sarnia in the afternoon, and back at Port Huron at night. Brother Nick Pietrangelo assumed full leadership of Port Huron in 1951.

Yet, the winds of change blew across this flourishing work. On January 10, 1951, Brother Mark had a revelation in the form of a dream that led him and his family to California in June of that year.

Miraculous Experiences

In July 1951, an event took place, which bore evidence to the divine authority of this Church. Brother Tony Scolaro, Branch #1, recalls:

Through the testimonies and efforts of Brother Arthur and Sister Elvira Maness, members of the Sarnia Indian Mission, a gentleman named Mr. Warwick became interested in our Church and began to attend meetings in Sarnia. . . .

Mr. Warwick was a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ LDS, which was located in Port Huron, Michigan. As he became acquainted with our Church and learned that we observed the ordinance of feet washing, he was greatly impressed by that, and he was also acquainted with the music composed by W. W. Phelps, who wrote Hymn #13 in our Saints Hymnal, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning." Mr. Warwick had sincere hopes of bringing the church that he was a member of and our Church together.

We were invited to a Sunday evening service in Port Huron, Michigan at the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ LDS, and as I recall, several carloads of brothers and sisters from Detroit Branch #1 attended, including Brother Paul Vitto and [me].

We were invited to sing, and we sang from our own "Saints Hymnal." We sang with inspiration, and as we sang, a woman, one of their members, testified she saw a shaft of light, from where she was sitting behind us, shine down on Brother Vitto and [me], and she heard a voice which said, 'These are my servants, and they have the true authority.'

Needless to say, we were all blessed, and gave testimony to the honor and glory of God.

Shortly afterward, we invited Mr. Warwick, and as many of his members who wished to come, to attend our feet washing service at Branch #1. Mr. Warwick and several of his members came on a Sunday afternoon and witnessed for themselves how we practice the ordinance of feet washing. They marveled and were impressed as they saw the scriptures being fulfilled, just as Jesus taught.

Unfortunately, after we informed them that they would have to be re-baptized by the authority given to our Church in order to become members of our Church, it appears all interest became lost.

In spite of the valiant efforts of these missionaries to establish this work, sufficient reinforcements and support to maintain it were lacking. By March of 1960, talk of selling the Port Huron building was evident within the District Minutes.

OTHER MISSIONARY WORK IN THE DISTRICT

The Mt. Brydges, Ontario, Canada Work

The work in Mt. Brydges, located about 10 miles west of London, Ontario, began circa 1944 by the testimony of the Muncey Indian Brothers as they worked on nearby farms. Their enthusiasm and faith in their God and Church amazed many. Brother Mark Randy states:

During the summertime, our men would go out to work in the fields to earn a meager subsistence. I was told later by the Hollanders, one of them was Warren Nellis from Coleman, Michigan, an apostle from the RLDS (Reorganized Latter Day Saints) Church, that our Church

members, [who] were working in the fields with them, had told them of The Church of Jesus Christ and Brother Mark. One of them said, "I have never met such enthusiastic Indians as these; they are good workers, they sing hymns all day long, and praise God unashamedly. We just had to come and see."

George Nicholas was preaching on the 29th chapter of Isaiah, verses 4, II, and I4 that Sunday. Brother George stated: "Our Indian people have been brought down to the dust. . . . But one day the world shall hear our voice. Jesus will be our defender; He will deliver our people." What Brother Nicholas didn't know was that he was speaking to six persons who believed in that chapter. When I gave time to these visitors to speak, Warren Nellis said in part, "My grandfather was with Joseph Smith in the building of Nauvoo's temple in Illinois. I have never heard such a clear interpretation of that chapter."

In 1944, Chris and Anna Van Bree came to visit Muncey also, where they, too, heard from the brothers of that Mission and were baptized. Brother Mark states:

One week after the six persons' visit, Christian and Anna Van Bree came. They also marveled at the unusual enthusiasm of the small group of our people. "What makes your people so happy?" Brother Amos Deleary was asked. He replied, "Come and see for yourself."

So they came. I was on my feet making my final remarks when the Van Brees came in. "I am so sorry you came late; I must dismiss this service. These people need to feed themselves; some of them have a long way to walk. But I want to tell you, this little Church has the keys of this last dispensation, to preach the Gospel of repentance to the nations." Suddenly, a sister stood up and spoke in the gift of tongues. The Dutch lady stood up and said in a loud voice, "Thus saith the Lord, This is my servant. Who hears him hears me."

Mr. Van Bree stood up and said, "This is my wife; she is a true woman. If this is what my wife heard, that's the way it is."

Brother Mark continues:

The following Sunday, the first meeting was held in Upin, near Mt. Brydges, Ontario. Brothers Joseph Loyalvo, Frank Ford, and Clifford Burgess came along. Two unusual things happened on this trip. Heavy rains and lightning [accompanied us] most of the way. . . . One light-

ning bolt struck our car; there was no damage, but it was powerful enough to stop the motor. Suddenly, it returned to normal.

At the appointed place, we found a house full of interested people. I asked Brother Joseph Lovalvo to speak. His sermon was inspired. As he sat down, Anna Van Bree stood up and said, "I saw this man five years ago. He spoke the same words in my dream. The angel said to me, 'When you meet this man, you will know you have met the truth.'" Her husband and son also stood up and reaffirmed that Anna had at several times related the words that she had heard. The words were quite a stir among those present.

This indeed was a beginning for the mission to come in Mt. Brydges. Meetings began in Mt. Brydges. Christian and Anna Van Bree were baptized, and others followed.

Services at that time were conducted by Brothers Thurman Furnier at Muncey and Brother Mark at Mt. Brydges in the mornings; then Brother Mark would join Brother Thurman at Muncey in the afternoon. When Brothers Cowan and Ford took over Muncey, it freed Brother Mark to wholly concentrate on Mt. Brydges. As Mt. Brydges began to flourish, Brother Joseph Lovalvo began to attend more frequently, along with others. Not too long after, Brother Mark became involved with Sunday evening meetings in his home, and works in Port Huron and Farwell, Michigan. In 1946, Brothers Joe Lovalvo and Nick Pietrangelo took over Mt. Brydges.

Brother Mark writes of the following inspiring experience:

Nick Pietrangelo had an opportunity to go and help in Port Huron. This gave me the freedom to visit Mt. Brydges. On one visit, Chris Van Bree asked me to go with him to Brantford, where his former pastor was dying with what was diagnosed as leukemia. When we arrived, he was in a coma. The doctor was present and thought I was to administer last rites. There were 11 children in this family, plus an aged mother. I had the family kneel according to age, holding onto each other's garments. I prayed for his healing. Lyndon Laird woke up! "Your hand reached out to me and lifted me from a chasm," he said. "It was not my hand," I said, "for my hand was on your head," I answered. "It was the hand of the Living Redeemer that lifted you. He alone could do this!"

Later, Lyndon and his son, Donald, were both baptized in Detroit. Eventually, Detroit Branch #3 took over the Mt. Brydges work.

Cedar Springs, Ontario, Canada

Cedar Springs, which is a small town located in the southern part of Ontario near Lake Erie, about 15 miles southeast of Chatham, was also started by Brother Mark Randy, and was originally under Detroit Branch #1. He began to hold meetings there in the spring of 1945.

Brother Mark writes:

We held services in Muncey and in Mt. Brydges, and others were baptized there. The number in Muncey grew to 56 faithful. Many visitors came each Sunday. One day, a woman came to the Van Brees' home in Mt. Brydges. The Van Brees had told her of the Glory of God shared among us. . . . She came from Cedar Springs, Ontario. Anna Hendricks stood up and said, "The half was not told me of the greatness of God's blessings. I want you to come and talk to my husband."

That day, a group of young sisters had come to visit from Windsor and Detroit. We held meetings in Muncey and in Mt. Brydges. Mrs. Hendricks was a very persistent person, with a broken heart. Jack Ford and Thurman Furnier were also present. Upon arriving in Cedar Springs, John Hendricks was at [his] church. Anna insisted we go there. "You must speak to my husband tonight," she was saying. . . . "For eight years . . . my children have been without the benefits of a united family. . . ."

Upon arriving at John's church, the pastor asked me to address the assembly. The Spirit of God was upon us all as soft rain as John and Anna [Hendricks] embraced and asked one another's forgiveness.

Meetings began in Cedar Springs. Windsor accepted the responsibility of caring for this new Mission. John and Anna were baptized, as well as others.

Responsibility for this work changed hands as Brother V. James Loyalvo wrote:

The work at Cedar Springs is now in the hands of Detroit Branch #4. We have had some very good meetings there in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Hendricks . . . They have borne testimony in the past two meetings declaring their intentions of being baptized in the Church, because they feel this is the true Gospel. . . . There are many souls in

Cedar Springs [who] have attended our services, which gladdens our hearts immensely. (*The Gospel News*, April 1945, p. 8)

On Sunday, May 20, Brothers Robert A. Watson of Windsor, and Concetto Alessandro of Detroit conducted the services at Cedar Springs and reported baptizing three converts in Lake Erie. (*The Gospel News*, June 1945, p. 6) By this time, there four members in this mission.

In the General Church Minutes, January 1946, a motion was passed to turn the Cedar Springs and Chatham work over to Detroit Branch #1, with Brother Concetto Alessandro in charge.

Creighton Mines, Ontario, Canada

Creighton Mines, which is about 12 miles west of Sudbury, Ontario, was the site of another mission that sprang up in the decade of the 1940s.

Brother William H. Cadman writes:

I have already stated that our recent Conference delegated me to visit some of our Church people up here . . . Elders Cuomo, Ford and Cadman set out to meet the Indians that live about some 20 miles [away]. Elder Samuel Cuomo has resided in Creighton Mines for many years . . . (*The Gospel News*, March 1945, p. 5)

Sister Rose Cuomo writes:

We have our Sunday School class every Sunday morning, our fellowship meeting at two in the afternoon, and M.B.A. every Friday night, and permit me to say that though we are small in number, we often feel the blessing of God. He says that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is there with them. (*The Gospel News*, April 1947, p. 7)

The Farwell, Michigan Mission

Shortly after World War II, a number of people living in Northern Michigan became interested in the Church. A number of baptisms resulted and a Mission was established under Branch #4. It became known as the Farwell Mission, located about 200 miles north of Detroit.

Brother Mark Randy writes:

In 1944, as I presided over Muncey, six white persons visited our Church as Brother George Nicholas was preaching. . . . Brother Frank Ford was visiting and followed by telling of his conversion into Christ. Many followed thereafter saying, "Love drew us to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which we knew nothing of until we gave our lives to Him." What we did not know was that those who came were of the Church of Christ (Fettingites). With them was Warren Nellis, an apostle of that church. We became friends quickly.

Later on when the work in Port Huron was starting, Brother Mark further writes:

Warren Nellis made several visits to Port Huron. . . . In 1945 Warren wrote me, inviting me to come to Farwell. I asked Brother Jim Lovalvo to accompany me.

Brother V. James Lovalvo continues the narrative as follows:

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 him 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 attempt. When we arrived at Farwell, there were about 35 people waiting for us at Warren Nellis' home. We were greeted very warmly by everyone and then we prepared for 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. But 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 spoke, following the same topic of the "love of God" with the Holy Spirit bearing 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. But 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 had felt a "coldness" when I had begun to preach.

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 hands under the jurisdiction of Branch #4.

My wife and I, with our two small children, held meetings in Farwell. . . . 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 30 persons were baptized including Warren Nellis and Earl Ewing, the two apostles of the Feddingnite 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.

Among the many spiritual blessings received at Farwell, one experience stands out remarkably clear. A Mrs. Collins, about 80 years old and a member of one of the Restored Gospel groups, began attending our meetings and 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 perturbed 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," 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 14 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 not prevail with her, nor convince her regardless of my arguments, I told her 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 [she was too

weak to kneel], ‘Lord, 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 14 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.” Then 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. We baptized Sister Collins and after we had confirmed her, we gave her Sacrament. 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 eyes.

Eventually, some of the members died, some moved away, and others left the Church, causing the ministry to have to close this mission, with much regret.

Other Missionary Ventures

Over the years there were other smaller works that were initiated with varying degrees of success. Church services have been held in the following locations:

- Flint, Michigan, beginning on June 21, 1930, by Brothers Wade Riggen and Carmine Campitelle.
- Jackson, Michigan, by Brother Dominic Cotellesse, at the home of Brother Evanson.
- Inkster, Michigan, by Brothers John Gammichia and Fredericco Straccia.
- Lansing, Michigan, by Brothers John Gammichia and Spencer Everett.
- Pontiac, Michigan, in 1947, by Brothers Joseph Lovalvo, Dominic Moraco, and Rocco Biscotti.
- Amherstberg, Ontario, Canada, by Brothers Joseph Johnson and Tony Pietrangelo.

FORMATION OF A NEW MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

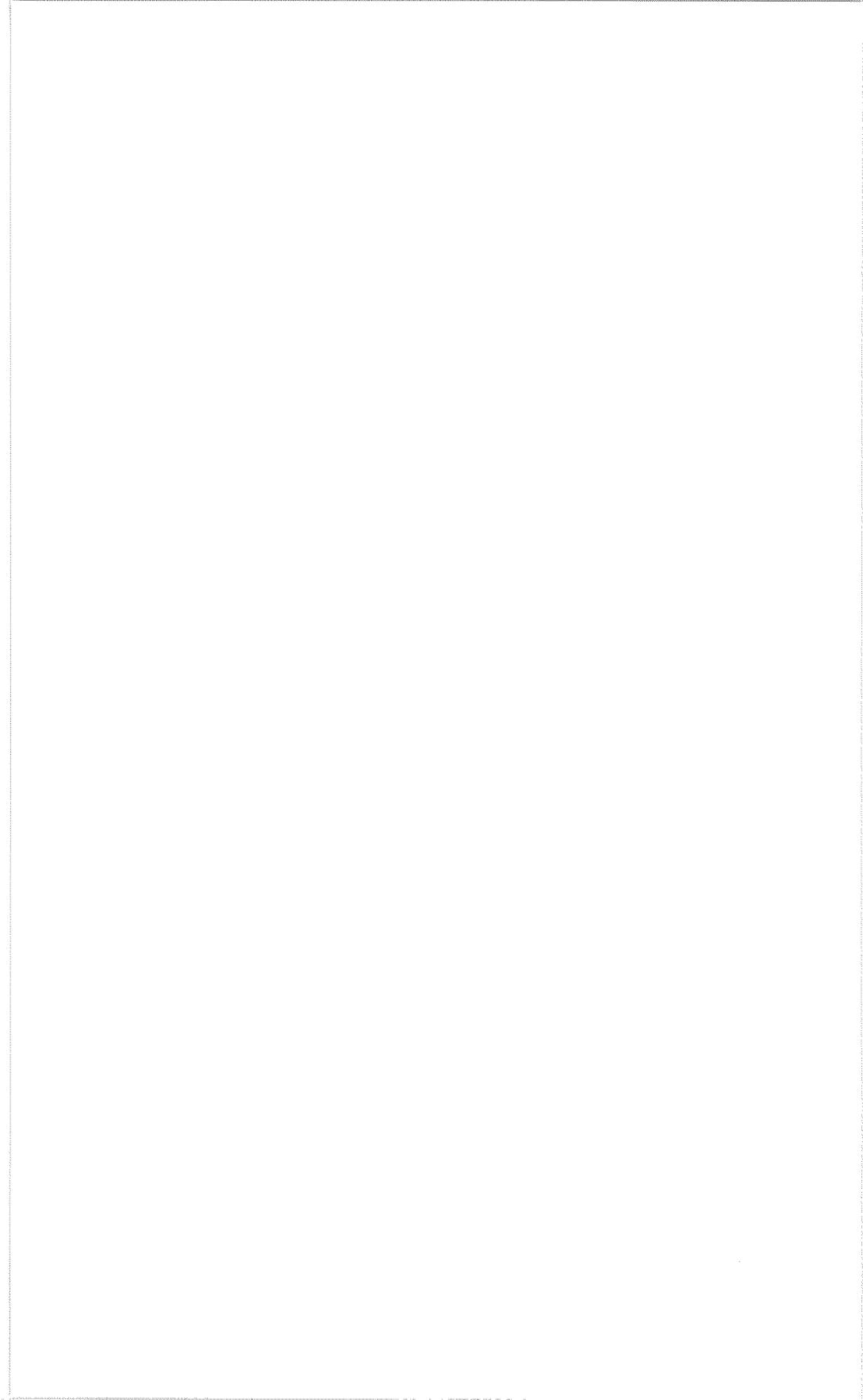
With all of the extensive missionary work being done, it became evident that a committee was needed to provide better leadership in the administration of these works.

A motion was passed to organize a District Missionary Committee to consist of five members. The five brothers who were elected to serve were as follows: Querino (Reno) Bologna, Anthony Gerace, Joseph Milantoni, Dominic Moraco and Dominic Thomas.

The function of the District Missionary Committee was outlined as follows:

- To continue giving assistance to the present Missions, seeing that sufficient elders are available for the work;
- To make a complete study of present work among missions, with possible means of promoting and improving same; also endeavor to determine immediate and future needs;
- To formulate a plan to handle District Missionary work in the future; said plan to be presented to the District Priesthood for final approval;
- That Committee members may call upon Presiding Elders and any brothers now working in the various Missions for their assistance and advice.

At the Michigan-Ontario District Conference in 1959 two major concerns were discussed: missionary replacements and financing the cost of maintaining these missions. At that time, Brother Clifford Burgess was in charge of the Grand River Mission, Brother Reno Bologna in Muncey and Brother Concetto Alessandro in Port Huron.



5

History
of the
Atlantic Coast
District

CHAPTER FIVE

Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest . . . I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. John 4:35, 38

The Church of Jesus Christ came to the Atlantic Coast at the end of an intense period of immigration from southern and eastern Europe to the United States. The city of New Brunswick, New Jersey lay about 30 miles southwest of Ellis Island in New York Harbor, where ten thousand immigrants a day first set foot on American soil. Founded on the south banks of the Raritan River in Colonial times, New Brunswick had become central New Jersey's major center of industry, commerce, and learning by the mid-1920s.

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

The Church of Jesus Christ in the Atlantic Coast had its beginning in 1925 in the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey. Sister Anna Frammolino of Detroit, Michigan explained:

In 1923, Brother Sam Percepe of Cleveland, Ohio had an experience after he was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ. He was overwhelmed by a strong desire to bring the Gospel to his father and mother-in-law, Antonio and Nunziata Mazzeo of New Brunswick, New Jersey. His first thought was to ask Brother Ishmael D'Amico to accompany him to New Jersey. He wrote to my husband in Detroit, asking him to tell Brother D'Amico of his plans. I [was asked to send] Brother Sam a reply to his letter, telling him that Brother D'Amico was unable to make the trip at this time but that [we] would fast and pray on the following Thursday about this matter.

On that same Thursday, Gabriel Mazzeo from New Brunswick told his mother he had a very strong desire to visit his Sister, Mary Angelo, in Cleveland, Ohio. On Friday night he left New Brunswick and arrived in Cleveland on Saturday morning. Brother Sam Percepe met Gabriel Mazzeo at the train station, and they fell upon their knees to thank God for answering their prayers.

Testimony of Brother Gabriel Mazzeo

When I was 16 years old, I had a great desire to visit my Sister Mary who lived in Cleveland, Ohio. I visited her and her family. I arrived on Saturday and on Sunday morning they asked me if I would go to Church with them.

I accompanied them to Church. At that time the meetings were held in the home of Brother and Sister Thomas in Euclid, a suburb of Cleveland. I enjoyed the meeting very much because the things which the elders preached were very plain and easy to understand. I learned many things that I never knew before.

I went to Church regularly with my sister and her family. I continued to enjoy the meetings very much. After attending Church for about three months, I decided that I wanted to be baptized. I felt a desire to receive the salvation of my soul and to enjoy the Paradise of God after the course of this life. I knew this step was necessary.

I made my desires known, and the following Sunday I was brought to a brook, because Lake Erie was frozen. I was baptized on March 2, 1924 by Brother Andrew Nemeth and was confirmed . . . a member of The Church of Jesus Christ on the same day by Brother Rocco Biscotti.

I would like to say at this time that when I came out of the waters of baptism, I felt as light as a feather, and at my confirmation I received the promise of the Holy Ghost. I felt very happy for this wonderful step which I had taken. My thoughts began to go towards my parents and my brothers who lived in New Brunswick, New Jersey. My desire to bring my testimony to them grew stronger.

After living approximately one year in Cleveland, I returned to New Brunswick. I spoke of The Church of Jesus Christ to my parents and my brothers. My parents and brother, Louis, received my testimony and desired to be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ. I returned to Cleveland, Ohio to make known the need for an elder in New Brunswick. The immediate need was to take care of these baptisms. A blind man, Brother Joseph Corrado, an apostle in The Church, volunteered to go with me. We attended the July General Conference of 1925

at West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. After visiting a few branches and missions, we continued on our way to New Brunswick.

Experience of Sister C. Dintino

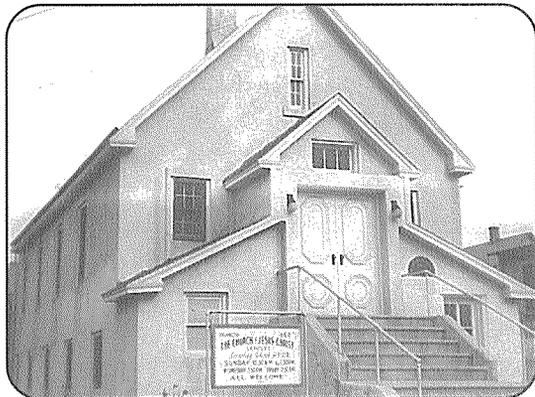
(Sister Dintino had this experience when Brothers Mazzeo and Corrado visited her on this trip.)

In 1925, Brothers Gabriel Mazzeo and Joseph Corrado visited Sister C. Dintino of Glassport, Pennsylvania. As they were leaving her home, Sister Dintino shook hands with Brother Gabriel Mazzeo. As they clasped hands, the Spirit of God was manifested upon them. Under the influence of the Spirit, Sister Dintino uttered these words, "You brethren shall have much success with the work of God in the State of New Jersey."

Testimony of Brother Gabriel Mazzeo (Continued)

My parents and my brother Louis were baptized by Brother Joseph Corrado. We began to hold services at the home of my parents on May Street in New Brunswick. It wasn't long before our home was inadequate because of the large number of people attending the meetings. Services were relocated to the home of my brother, Louis, on Charles Street. Attendance continued to increase and my brother's home was inadequate. We rented a hall on Remsen Avenue to accommodate the many souls who obeyed the Gospel. During the first three months that the Gospel was preached in New Brunswick, there were 23 baptisms! In 1926, my brother, Louis, donated the lot at 21 Charles Street, New Brunswick and a church building was built on this lot for \$3,500.

Brother Eugene Perri Sr., an evange-



New Brunswick Church Building on Charles St.

list from Lorain, Ohio, volunteered to come to New Jersey to assist with the work of God. When he arrived, his involvement was immediate and a great encouragement.

Many people repented of their sins and were baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ. Elders were ordained, many healings and blessings were experienced by the saints, and spiritual fellowship was enjoyed for years to come. . . .

During the General Church Conference of July 3, 1926, Brother Gabriel Mazzeo of New Brunswick, New Jersey was recommended for the priesthood by the Ministerial Board. He was 19 years of age and was the first elder ordained in New Jersey. Three years later, during the 1929 October Conference, Brother Mazzeo was ordained an evangelist.

At the Conference of October 1926, Brother Joseph Corrado reported that the Church had been incorporated in the State of New Jersey at a cost of \$40.

Many blessings were experienced through the years. One outstanding example happened in 1927, when a man was healed while being baptized by Brother Corrado.

Brother C.C. Edwards, an Algonquin Indian who had been baptized at the New Brunswick Branch was ordained an elder in 1928. He gave an encouraging report on missionary work.

Testimony of Brother Eugene Perri, Sr.

I was born in Italy on December 25, 1897. When I was born my parents did not expect me to live because of the weakness and frailty of my body. However, God saw fit to spare my life for a wise purpose in Him, and to Him I give the praise. In 1914 the First World War broke out and I was inducted into the Italian Army at the age of 17. When I left home there were 11 of us in the family, including my father and mother. When I returned five years later, I found the farmhouse we lived in all boarded up. My parents had died from the influenza epidemic of 1918. My brothers were in the service, and my sisters were all married. I wrote to my sister Carmela in America and inquired if she would mind [my] coming to be near her. She replied with a letter of welcome, and I soon made my journey to America. God was already at work in my life without my knowing it.

I arrived in America on December 14, 1920. I became acquainted with The Church of Jesus Christ in Monesson, Pennsylvania. I loved the Church because I had found a people who not only professed to have the truth but lived it and loved one another. I was convinced of the truth and baptized August 14, 1921. I belonged to the Dunlevy, Pennsylvania Branch and sat under the teachings of Apostle John K. Penn. He spoke with great power, and the blessings of God were in our midst.

After 11 months I met Brother Ishmael D'Amico, who came to a General Church Conference in Pennsylvania. I felt such a joy and a blessing in the company of this brother that I made it a matter of prayer if God would be pleased if I moved to his part of the vineyard. My prayer was answered to my entire satisfaction, and a short time later I moved to Detroit, Michigan.

While living in Detroit, Brother Joseph Corrado, an apostle of the Church, came from Cleveland, Ohio and stayed with us for an entire week. He was a wonderful man of God. He was blind and was traveling alone. This moved me with compassion, and when he prepared to return to Cleveland, I told him that I would accompany him to the railroad station to see that he boarded the right train. When we arrived at the station, I didn't feel that it was right for me to allow this brother to travel to Cleveland alone in his condition, so I purchased a ticket to Cleveland for myself with the thought of returning immediately to my place in Detroit.

While traveling on the train, Brother Corrado told me of a need for someone to help out a small mission in Lorain, Ohio. There were about six people living there, some of them related to me, who were members of the Church, and a few young people, but there was no elder. I didn't feel that it was right for me to leave Detroit, but Brother Joe convinced me that a need existed and that God would be pleased, even though I was not an elder, if I could stay there and help them along.

In April 1923, I was ordained an elder. The desire to preach the Gospel was the principal motivation in my life. Brother Joseph Corrado and I traveled as far west as Chicago to bear our testimonies.

In October of 1925, I was called [into] the Quorum of Seventy Evangelists. When Brother Joe Corrado traveled to New Brunswick, New Jersey to preach to the family of young Gabriel Mazzeo, who had recently obeyed the Gospel in Cleveland, I told him upon leaving that, if he needed my help, to write to me and I would come to New Brunswick to assist him.

Brother Joe wrote to me and requested that I come to New Brunswick to help him. He was not able to baptize anyone because of his blind-

ness. I fasted and prayed sincerely before the Lord and He spoke to me and said, "I have blessed you and will continue to bless you."

I left Lorain, Ohio on August 1, 1925 and arrived the next day in New Brunswick, New Jersey. We held meetings in Brother Louis Mazzeo's home. As time passed, the Lord used me in His own mysterious way by bringing many souls to The Church of Jesus Christ. Many of them were baptized.

One Sunday afternoon while I was returning home from church, walking on Livingston Avenue in New Brunswick, the voice of the Lord spoke to me and said, "Go out and preach My Gospel." While meditating on these words, I remembered a man by the name of Anthony DiFede. I immediately went to his home. There I found six people discussing their dissatisfaction with their religion. I spoke to them of The Church of Jesus Christ, and four of the six were baptized. They were Joseph DiFede, his mother Rose, Salvatore Valenti, and his wife, Anna. Shortly, others followed and were baptized as well.

In the first two years, from 1925 to 1927, 293 people were baptized into the Church in New Brunswick alone. Several other branches, Edison, Metuchen, and Hopelawn, New Jersey, as well as Brooklyn and the Bronx, New York, sprang from this early work in New Brunswick.

Salvatore and Anna Valenti

In 1910, Salvatore Valenti, then a young man of 18, set sail from Italy for America in search of his dreams. Six years later, he married Anna DiFede, whom he had known in Italy, and the couple took up residence in the Bronx, New York. They moved to New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1918, where they joined a Presbyterian Church. However, the minister of this particular church did not believe that God still performed healings in modern times, and he spoke very strongly against the idea. Reading in the Bible that God is the same today as He was yesterday, the Valentis grew very dissatisfied with this church.

One day in January, 1926, the Valentis went over to visit with Anna's family. While they were there, a minister came to talk to Anna's brother, Anthony DiFede, about his church. The minister's name was Eugene Perri, and he spoke of a Restored Gospel to be found in The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Perri described an atmosphere in which God worked with people just as He had in the Bible. Healings and other miracles were

still very much evident. It sounded like just what Salvatore and Anna were looking for. They inquired about the location of the church and began attending along with several other members of Anna's family. The first meeting they attended was a feet washing service, something they had never witnessed before.

A few weeks later, Salvatore and Anna, along with Joseph DiFede, were baptized on February 19, 1926. Full of zeal, the couple told all with whom they came in contact about this Church where God was so alive, and how any who were sick were able to be healed by going to the Lord in prayer. Little did they know that within a few months, their faith in this principle would be put to the test:

One morning, while Brother Salvatore was leaving for work, his one-year-old son Gerard ran out after his father and was standing behind the car as it backed out of the driveway. While the rest of the family ran out of the house screaming, the child was knocked down and the car's tire ran over both his legs, crushing them just below the torso. When Brother Sal realized he had run over something, he put his head down on the steering wheel and prayed that the Lord wouldn't let him see one of his children crushed under the car. Meanwhile, his wife, Sister Anna, ran out and picked up little Jerry, whose legs were now just dangling in a very unnatural fashion.

Sister Anna carried the child into the house and laid him on the bed. What were they to do? They had professed to have faith in God to perform healings, so the family knelt down and prayed. When the prayer was completed, Brother Sal left for work and Sister Anna went about her housework but continued to pray throughout the day. The child was left completely in the Lord's hands, in spite of the seriousness of the injury.

A short while later, while Sister Anna was working in the kitchen, she felt a child pulling at her house dress from behind. At first, she began to "shoo" the child away as she was busy, but suddenly she froze and spun around. Little Jerry was running around as if nothing had ever happened! His legs showed no sign of injury whatsoever.

The following Sunday, Brother Valenti bore his testimony in the New Brunswick Branch:

“We had a little accident at home this week but, thank God, everything turned out all right.”

When Sister Anna gave her testimony, she went into great detail of what had occurred and praised God for performing a miracle. After church, Brother Sal told his wife she'd made too much of a “big deal” of the whole thing. That night, after going to bed, Brother Sal was awakened by a tapping at his bedroom window. Upon arising and opening the window, he saw a man standing outside, holding two shopping bags. The man handed him the two bags and said: “But for the grace of God, this would be your son.” In one bag were the child's legs; in the other bag was his torso. Brother Sal returned to church the following Sunday and thanked God as he should have in the first place. Thus, the Lord not only performed a miracle but taught us a powerful lesson about thanking Him as well.

District Conferences Held at New Brunswick, New Jersey

There were three district conferences held in New Brunswick in the decade of the 1930s: August 1930, October 1936, and October 1939.

The one in 1930 was the first in New Jersey and was held at Workman's Circle Institute Hall, August 23 and 24. Brother William Cadman spoke principally concerning the necessity of the unity of The Church of Jesus Christ, regardless of the place where the saints may be found, and the importance of being in one body in Jesus Christ. Brother Charles Ashton spoke concerning the Jews having the Gospel first, and how they shall have it last, while the Gentiles, who had it last, have it first by the Restoration of the Gospel in this last dispensation of time. The Gentiles' mission is to carry the Gospel to Israel. He then exhorted the saints to be worthy of this great mission.

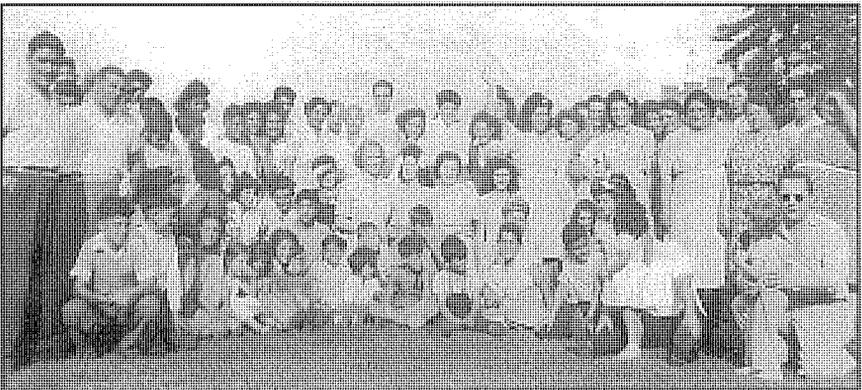
The following resolution was presented by Brother Cadman and was accepted by the saints:

Be it resolved and understood, that we, assembled in District Conference here in New Brunswick, New Jersey, are only a part of The Church of Jesus Christ that was organized at Green Oak, Pennsylvania in the year of 1862. And further, that we, the Church here in New Jersey, pledge ourselves to be in harmony and in complete subordination, both in spiritual and temporal affairs, to the will and authority of the General Body of The Church, whose headquarters are at Monongahela City, Pennsylvania.

The report of mission work showed that 226 members were baptized in New Brunswick and vicinity from July 19, 1925 to August 23, 1930. During this period of time, a few had gone back to the ways of the world, and some had died, which left a membership of 190 members.

The District Conference of October 1936, presided by William H. Cadman, was held in a rented hall. Brother Cadman commented that many have been moved upon in strange ways and brought from various other faiths to obey the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The District Conference of October 1939 was held in the New Jersey Armory. Representation from the different branches and missions was very small in comparison to the previous conferences.



Gathering of the saints in New Brunswick, circa 1940s

Twenty Baptized in the Atlantic Coast on July 23, 1950

Recounted by Brother Joseph Perri

During the middle to late 1940s, through the 1950s and into the 1960s, we had a group of young people from New Jersey and from the Bronx, New York who dedicated themselves to creating a bond of friendship and wanting to associate together as often as possible. The Church of Jesus Christ had become the main attraction in our lives. Being with the brothers and sisters of the Church and with one another became very important to us. Our activities centered around each other and the Church.

On Monday evenings, we had choir. Tuesday evenings was Ladies' Circle, and often the young men got together as well. Wednesday evenings we had a Branch worship service, Thursdays were open, and Fridays we had Branch worship again. Saturday afternoons we played sports together and prepared for our Saturday evening get-togethers at different homes. Here we would sing and prepare programs for our MBA meetings. This was a routine that went on for week after month after year.

Sunday mornings we attended our respective Branch worship service. However, on Sunday afternoons we met together in the Branch where the MBA meeting was scheduled to be held that evening. The New Jersey Local MBA had a membership of approximately 125, and our meetings rotated between the four New Jersey Branches, namely, New Brunswick, Edison (then known as Stelton), Metuchen, and Hopelawn.

Many of us, if not all, had been blessed as babies or young children in The Church of Jesus Christ. We were taught of goodly parents, like Nephi of old, and the Church became part of our heritage. God had blessed our parents to find their way to The Church of Jesus Christ and to obey the Gospel, thus providing a haven of rest for our souls.

On Sunday morning, July 16, 1950, we were assembled in my home branch of New Brunswick. During the morning service and the recess that followed, I began to reflect on how I had been blessed since childhood. I had seen and heard many wonderful brothers and sisters bear their testimony, with tears running down their cheeks, of how thankful they were that God had called them from the world of sin and brought them to the knowledge of the Truth. Other experiences came to me, one of which I saw with my own eyes, how God had spared my father from serious injury or even death.

My father, Brother Eugene Perri, Sr., would take me on many of his visits when he would evangelize the Gospel. On one particular afternoon, Brother Scalzone and my father went to a home to preach the Gospel. I sat alongside my father in the kitchen of the home we were visiting, listening to what was being said. Although the conversation was in the Italian language, I could understand what it was about.

All of a sudden, a man came into the house, reached behind the stove, and picked up a steel poker that was used to stir the wood and coals in the stove. He then came over to where my father and I were sitting. Holding the rod with both hands, the man raised his arms and was going to strike my father on the head with that rod. As he came down within inches of striking my father, he froze. He could not come down any further with the rod to strike my father. As young as I was, I knew that it was the power of God that made this man freeze. He remained in that posture for a few moments, then turned away and proceeded to put the poker back behind the stove and then walked out the door. Neither my father nor Brother Scalzone was frightened [in spite of] what was taking place, but I had never seen anything like that before. Their conversation continued and as a result, there was a baptism. I was about 14 years old at the time.

On this day in 1950, these thoughts were coming to me, and I could not deny that this was the Church that had the power of God and possessed the authority of God. Having pondered over some of these things that came to me, I had a feeling to ask for my baptism. I had no personal experience nor dream to request baptism.

I did want to have someone accompany me so I asked my dear friend, August D'Orazio Jr., whom I had known since childhood days, if he would come with me. His reply was, "If you are prepared to ask to be baptized, then do so; but I am not ready yet." Having said no more about it to anyone during our lunch break, young people from the other branches began to assemble. The MBA meeting was to be held that evening in the New Brunswick Branch, so we had a nice group for our testimony meeting. The weather was cloudy and dreary, but that did not stop our group from coming together.

I could not wait until our afternoon meeting got under way and our presiding elder would open the meeting for testimony. I was excited about asking for my baptism and making my commitment to Jesus Christ. I had not even talked to my parents about what my intent was. When the meeting was opened and turned over to the brothers and sisters to bear testimony, I called Hymn No. 337, *I Surrender All*. When the

hymn was concluded I stood and asked the saints to accept me as a member of the Church. I then requested of the ministry that I wanted to be baptized.

When I took my seat, to my surprise August D'Orazio, who had been sitting next to me, stood up and requested his baptism. It did not end there, because the spirit of repentance and baptism took hold of our meeting and 13 other young people requested their baptisms, making a total of fifteen of us. The subject of baptism was never discussed between our group, nor was it planned in any way. I do not believe that any of the young people who assembled that Sunday afternoon knew that they would request their baptism that day.

As stated earlier, it was a very dreary and cloudy day, but when the last request for baptism was made, the sun's rays shone through the windows as if to relay to us that God was pleased as to what was done.

As word reached the other members of our youth group who were unable to meet with us that Sunday afternoon that 15 requests were made for baptism, five other young people requested their baptism as well, making a total of 20 souls that had decided to become part of the family of God.

On the following Sunday, July 23, 1950, we gathered at the Raritan Bay in Perth Amboy where one by one we were immersed into the waters of baptism by Evangelists Gabriel Mazzeo and Rocco Ensana. A large crowd of brothers, sisters, and strangers had assembled by the water's edge to witness this great event that was never seen here before. When the baptisms had ended, each of the group that had been baptized returned to their respective branch for confirmation. The local newspaper published an article describing the event.

Earlier that year, an ammunition barge had exploded in the Raritan River, polluting the water. The tide's rise and fall had kept this pollution in the bay for an extended period of time. When I was immersed, I swallowed some of this polluted water, causing me to have an upset stomach. I began to wonder if indeed I had done the right thing. During the afternoon confirmation service, when the gift of the Holy Ghost was pronounced upon me, that feeling of sickness was taken away from me immediately and I knew beyond doubt that the life with Christ and His saints that I had chosen was the right choice.

The names of those who were baptized and their home branches are as follows: From New Brunswick, New Jersey: Joseph Perri, Frank Mazzeo, Angelina Cristello, Rose Cristello, and Susan Scalzone. From

Stelton (Edison), New Jersey: John Rogolino, Joan Rogolino, Betty Ensana, and Iris Hager. From the Bronx, New York: Josephine Azzinaro. From Metuchen, New Jersey: August D'Orazio, Laura Chobin, Edith Arcuri, and Jennie Arcuri. From Hopelawn, New Jersey: Mary Benyola, Marie Benyola, Regina Purkall, Elizabeth Sipos, Nancy Benyola and Mary Jane Benyola.

THE BROOKLYN, NEW YORK BRANCH

Brother Salvatore Valenti was ordained into the priesthood at the January 1927 Conference. Six months later, as he was talking to Brother Natale Samarro, Brother Samarro received a revelation urging him to share the Gospel with some acquaintances in Brooklyn, New York. He wanted an elder to go with him, however. He and Brother Valenti made it a matter of prayer, and, that night, Brother Sal had a dream. In his dream he was powerless to perform even the basic tasks of everyday life, only to find that the Lord had taken care of it for him. The Lord told him, "Remember this: That which you cannot do, I will do." Brother Sal asked Him whether it was His will that he go to Brooklyn. The Lord answered, "Go there now, and you shall find Me there."

Accompanied by Brother Samarro, his wife and Brother Sirangelo, Brother Valenti traveled to Brooklyn in July 1927 to visit the family of Dimitio Torano. The brothers delivered the good news of salvation and their testimony was well received by the family. A follow-up visit was made by Brothers Joseph Corrado and Bill Mazzeo, who encouraged the family to attend services in New Brunswick. The Toranos did indeed start going to church there and were eventually baptized.

Brooklyn, New York is an area about ten miles square on the western end of Long Island that in 1990 was home to over 2,800,000 people. In the 1920s, there were fewer people living there, but it was still a crowded place, because property so close to New York City was very expensive. In the Bedford neighborhood, where the Church was first established, most of the houses were built in attached rows, with no space in between, no

driveways, garages, nor lawns. Having no place to park your car did not matter, because not very many people had one, nor needed one.

At the time The Church of Jesus Christ came to Brooklyn, the 32-mile trip from New Brunswick entailed two car ferry rides, one from New Jersey to Staten Island, and one from Staten Island to Brooklyn, and took at least an hour and a half to complete. Taking the train and the subways took even longer.

After a few months of commuting from Brooklyn to New Brunswick, the Toranos desired to attend services closer to home, so they asked Brother Corrado to consider opening a mission in Brooklyn. Brother Eugene Perri was assigned to the work and held services in Brooklyn from September 1927 until April 1928. In April, Brother Corrado, following the direction of the Lord, assigned Brother Valenti to the work. Brother Sal traveled from his home in New Brunswick to Brooklyn every Sunday for about two months until he received a direct commandment from the Lord:

In June 1928, God came to me in a dream. He said, "While you continue to live in New Brunswick, you cannot do any missionary work for me in Brooklyn." After hearing the voice of the Lord, I saw Brother Joseph DiFede and myself dressed in soldiers' uniforms, ready to go into the military service. Our valises were ready at the front door of Sister Ida Lupo of New Brunswick as we waited for someone to come and pick us up. A messenger from the station came and told us the train was waiting for us to board. At the station, the head trains-man called me and told me to run the train. I answered, "I don't know how, because I have never guided a train." He said, "I'll give you instructions," and, after showing me how to make the train run forward, he said, "I'll always be in front of you for you to learn."

In accordance with the dream, Brother DiFede (Sister Anna Valenti's brother) was enlisted to accompany Brother Valenti in the missionary work in Brooklyn. The two elders asked for God's guidance and then went apartment hunting in Brooklyn. The Lord led them to a six-room apartment, which had ample living space and a very large front parlor, suitable for holding worship services. The first meeting at the new mis-

sion was held on Sunday, July 26, 1928. That first service attracted visitors to the Church, such as Vincent Margiore and his wife, who lived on the third floor of the same house, attended the meeting. They marveled when they heard that this group represented The Church of Jesus Christ and the Restored Gospel. They became regular attendees after that.

The Lord began showing miracles to the Margiore family. A brother-in-law who lived with them was unable to walk. He was not even able to rise upon his feet. Brother Valenti visited their home one-day and this man asked to be anointed so that the Lord would heal him and enable him to walk again. Brother Sal anointed the man and, as soon as his prayer was completed and his hands were removed from his head, the man jumped up from his chair onto his feet, exclaiming, "I can walk! I can walk!" He and his wife began attending services at the mission after that. God called four new members into the Church in September 1928: Vincent Margiore and his wife and Castresse Carandenti and his wife. Arthur and Amelia Margiore were baptized the following month on October 28, 1928.

The Lord performed another miracle within Brother Margiore's family. Their small daughter, two years of age, fell from their third floor window and was very badly injured. Her body was all bruised, and she appeared to be close to death. The child was anointed and God was petitioned to restore her health. By the following morning, her skin had returned to its normal color and she was well again. As a result of this miracle, more visitors began coming to church, of which four more were baptized. By the end of 1928, the membership in Brooklyn had increased to 21.

By the middle of 1929, with the membership having grown to 28, the living room in the apartment was no longer suitable for holding meetings, so, in June, the group rented a storefront on Brooklyn's Park Avenue at the cost of \$28 per month. The first meeting at the store yielded more visitors, one of whom was later baptized.

One morning, Brother Sal received a call from Brother Torano. Sister Torano was stricken with appendicitis and desired to be anointed. Brother Sal went over and anointed her, and she felt some relief, but an

hour later, the pain returned and Brother Valenti was summoned again. Sister Torano told Brother Sal to put his hand on the afflicted area while praying. When he did so, he was surprised to find her side swollen to the size of a grapefruit. However, thank God, during the prayer, the swelling went down like a deflating balloon and she was healed. Word of this miracle caused several new people to attend services at the Park Avenue storefront.

One night, Brother Sal was called to the home of Vincent and Nancy Azzinaro to anoint one of their sons, who was ill. After the prayer, the boy immediately quieted down and felt better. This couple became more regular attendees at the meetings, and soon after were baptized. By the end of 1929, the Brooklyn membership stood at 35.

In a three-month period in 1930, 16 people were baptized, bringing the total to 51 and still counting. Another miracle in 1931 brought additional visitors (and later members) to the mission. This time, a woman who was in the hospital was sent home, as the doctors had done all they could and decided to let her spend her "last days" at home. The woman was anointed and was restored to complete health. Among those eventually baptized as a result of this miracle were Carmine Mineo and his wife; Charles Mineo and his wife; John Onorato (whose father was baptized some time earlier) and his wife; Carmelo Interlicchio (whose wife was baptized at an earlier date), his nephew Alfred Interlicchio, and Alfred's wife.

The Brooklyn Mission, now 60 members strong, relocated to another storefront on Spencer Street in 1932. The benefit of this new location was that it had steam heat. However, this was only a temporary location, as the brothers and sisters decided it was time to look into owning their own church building. They looked around and finally purchased a house at 40A Willoughby Avenue. The purchase price was \$2500, \$1500 down and a \$1000 mortgage. In order to convert the house into a church, additional funds were required. A special collection was taken and, even though it was during the time of the Great Depression, sufficient funds were raised to prepare the building for church services. The

church was dedicated to the service of the Lord on June 5, 1932. From then until the end of the year, Brooklyn was blessed with 10 more baptisms. Among those baptized was Gorie Ciaravino who, years later would be ordained into the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and would serve as General Church President for a number of years. Also baptized were five members of the Candreva family, as well as Guy Rose and his son Dominick. Dominick Rose was baptized at the age of 13 on September 11, 1932 by Brother Salvatore Valenti:

I had no special experience as to my calling into The Church of Jesus Christ, but I was convinced that it was the true Church, as I observed that all of the functions of the Church were in accordance with the Scriptures. I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit convinced me and inspired me to ask for my baptism.

Another miracle occurred later that year. A sister was afflicted, but the doctors could not diagnose her illness. Whatever medication she was given did not help her at all. One day, during a church service, the sister was attacked by an evil spirit upon her body. She was anointed, and the evil spirit was commanded to depart from her in the name of Jesus Christ. The evil spirit left her, and she was healed of her affliction as well.

Sister Taminzola and her daughter were baptized in 1933. Also baptized were brother Braiotta and Brother and Sister Frigola. These three lived in the Bronx, and were introduced to the Gospel by Brother Carmen Talerico.

In only five years of holding meetings of The Church of Jesus Christ in Brooklyn, the missionaries had overseen a quickly blossoming work, resulting in a membership of 75 people by 1933.

Bath Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

In 1953, Brother Joe Benyola recognized the need for the members of the Church in Brooklyn, New York to have a place of worship. God inspired him to close his barbershop and he worked on building a church in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, with the assistance of many



Gathering of Saints with William H. Cadman (center), before his trip to Africa, 1954. (Brooklyn Church Building on Bath Avenue under construction)

brothers and sisters and friends. The Brooklyn Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ was dedicated on January 1, 1955.

THE EDISON, NEW JERSEY BRANCH (Formerly known as the Stelton Mission)

While today it is considered part of the New York metropolitan region, most of the area surrounding New Brunswick in 1930 was still farmland and undeveloped woods, with occasional settlements like Stelton and Metuchen located at the crossing of dirt roads every few miles. These towns consisted of little more than a post office, a few stores, possibly a train station, and a cluster of homes. There was usually an old church or two, many with a graveyard dating back to Colonial times.

Automobiles were still relatively new to the landscape; the old roads were unpaved and the new ones still hadn't been built. If you could afford it, there were trains to distant cities and the towns in between. Everywhere else was hard to get to; you either walked, took a bus, or knew someone who had a car.

Brother Rocco Ensana's Testimony

I was born in Italy in 1898 and came to the land of America in 1901. I was born and reared in the Catholic religion. My religion remained the same until the day I met The Gospel of Jesus Christ. This occurred sometime during 1926. I was introduced to The Gospel by Brother Louis Mazzeo; he and I worked together in the same factory.

In early 1926, I went to Gabriel Mazzeo's home to defend the Catholic Church. There I met Brothers Joseph Corrado, Gabriel Mazzeo and Eugene Perri, Sr. I requested to speak to Brother Joseph Corrado privately. My purpose was to vigorously defend my Catholic faith. But, to my astonishment, I was deeply impressed by the words of Brother Corrado. However, I would not commit myself.

Brother Corrado handed me The Book of Mormon. He urged me to read it. This was the first book I received in the Church. I began reading this book the moment I left Louis Mazzeo's home. The next thing I knew I found myself at home, still reading the book. To my amazement, I had boarded a bus, got off this bus, walked from the bus stop to my home, into the living room, but I do not remember doing any of this. In time, I realized that I had received an experience! I read The Book of Mormon completely and thoroughly before I accepted The Church.

I began to attend meetings in the home of Louis Mazzeo. But his home became inadequate. We moved to the Masonic Temple on Remsen Avenue in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

I was baptized April 23, 1926 by Brother Eugene Perri, Sr. and confirmed by Brother Joseph Corrado.

During a Sunday afternoon meeting in November 1926, I heard a beautiful voice speaking to me saying, "Go to your sister's house and tell [her] of the Gospel." When I arrived home, I told my wife the experience. She was hesitant and questioned me about going to my sister's home. Brother Joseph Corrado, who was visiting us, told her to let me go. I departed for her home immediately, about three miles northeast of New Brunswick across the Raritan River, with The Book of Mormon and the Bible. I decided to ask Brother Anthony Moroni to accompany me. When we arrived at my sister's home, to our surprise, several people were visiting there. We met my sister Pasqua, her husband Anthony Sgro, their son and daughter, Carmen and Jennie Sgro, Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Canella, and their daughter, Theresa Canella. I explained to them the Restored Gospel, its purity, and the purpose of the

Restoration. I told them of my experience and we had a word of prayer.

Brother Carmen Sgro, District Historian, continues:

I remember the occasion very well, although I was only 16 years old at the time. When I heard my Uncle Rocco tell of the Restoration, I knew in my heart that here was something good, and I wanted to hear more.

When Uncle Rocco concluded his talk, my mother said to him, "Rocco, write my name in that Book of Life." He answered her, "First you must come to the Church, believe, repent and be baptized." My father said to Uncle Rocco, "First I will send my son, Carmen; if he will change, then I will come." Uncle Rocco convinced my father that he should come and bring his children to Church. This he did.

Five of the seven mentioned visited the Church; my sister Pasqua and Saravina Canella were baptized without any prior Church attendance. They did not attend Church until after their baptisms. After attending four meetings, Anthony, Carmen, and Jennie Sgro, as well as Christopher and Theresa Canella, asked to be baptized. Consequently, instead of five, we had seven baptisms on September 26, 1926. The baptisms were officiated by our beloved Brother Gabriel Mazzeo. He was 19 years of age and baptized all seven. This group was his first officiation, beginning with Brother Carmen Sgro.

Sister Pasqua Sgro had an experience on Friday night prior to the Sunday that Brother Rocco Ensana was inspired to go to her home. She dreamed she was standing in her garden and saw her brother Rocco with a stranger. As they approached her home, she heard them singing a song. The melody of that song was exceedingly beautiful beyond anything she ever heard. Her dream ended. The song and melody were the Gospel tidings, which Brother Rocco Ensana and Brother Anthony Moroni brought to our home two days later. The dream was fulfilled!

Brother Rocco Ensana's testimonial account continues:

The Wednesday following their baptisms, while I was eating lunch, I heard a voice, repeated twice, "Go to your mother's house." I was obedient to the voice. I walked 14 blocks, feeling the wind pushing me to their home. When I reached my father's store, I heard someone crying. I found my sister Pasqua being persecuted by our parents and

friends. They were trying to persuade her to leave the Church. By inspiration, I was sent to deliver her.

An Experience Witnessed by Carmen Sgro

The day before we were baptized, I was sitting in the living room reading *The Book of Mormon*. My mother was washing the floor. Suddenly, she stopped working and, looking up towards the ceiling, she spoke these words, "Lord, if this is Your Church, open the windows of Heaven and bless my family and my house." When she finished speaking, a strange vibrating motion came over her body. It was so strong that she almost fell to the floor. This feeling remained with her until the day that the Lord called her to His heavenly home. After we were baptized, we realized that she had received the Spirit of the Lord.

Brother Rocco Ensana continues his account:

At the January Conference of 1928, I was ordained an elder along with Brothers Louis Mazzeo and Joseph DiFede. We were told by Brother Joseph Corrado that we must go out and preach *The Gospel*. We did! The membership continued to increase, and in 1928, we began to meet in the home of Brother Sam Suriano.

On Labor Day 1928, I went to Patsy Rogolino's home to preach the Gospel. They obeyed the Gospel. A short time later, Leo Arcuri and his wife, Stella, Patsy and Mary Verducci, and Frank and Frances Venuto, along with the Cantamessa family, were baptized into the Church. Brother Sam Suriano had to remodel his home to accommodate the meetings. He removed the wall from the sun parlor to enlarge the room. Many people were being baptized into the Church. I want to mention that the Sgro family, the Canellas, the Rogolinos, the Verduccis and the Arcuris walked to Brother Suriano's home to attend the meetings. Their efforts were made in spite of adverse weather conditions. Their families were large, and at times it was difficult. But they never complained nor wavered. Neighbors would laugh and mock them, but to no avail. These families persevered.

The home of Brother Sam Suriano soon became inadequate to hold meetings, so we rented a store on Player Avenue in Piscataway Town (later part of Edison Township). We received many blessings there; the children in our meetings spoke in the gift of tongues! Those individuals

who attended these meetings will never forget the experiences we had in that mission.

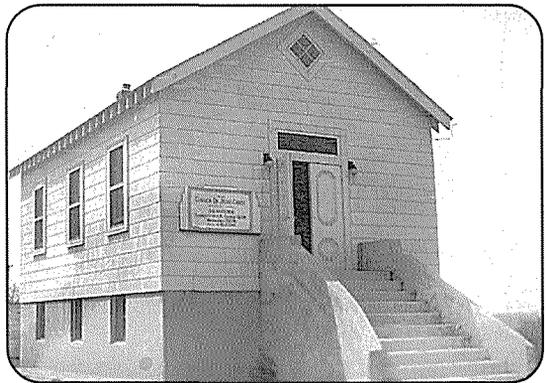
Brother Patsy Rogolino was ordained an elder and placed in charge of the Piscataway Mission. I went to Plainfield, New Jersey (about eight miles north) to preach the Gospel. Sixteen people were converted. From Plainfield, I attended the Brooklyn Mission for 18 months. Then, I returned to the former Piscataway Mission, which had moved from Player Avenue to Brother Patsy Rogolino's home in nearby Stelton. I was made presiding elder of the Stelton, New Jersey Mission. I requested the brothers and sisters to pray for me so I could obtain enough money to build a church building. I went to many places and received money and materials to build this building. Within nine months, our Church was not only completed, it was paid in full.

Brother Anthony Sgro had a dream concerning the building of the Church in Stelton, New Jersey. He saw the ground where The Church was to be built. He noticed that there was no water on this ground and he was discouraged. Then, he saw in the middle of the ground, a fountain come up and in each corner of the property a fountain sprang up. He asked the Lord what this meant; the Lord said, "This is My Church and the place where it should be built."

We received much help from Brother Sam Risola and others. The sisters helped us. Sister Pasqua Sgro cooked lunch for the brothers every day. The Church was completed in 1941.

Dedication of the Church at Stelton, New Jersey

The first meeting of the Stelton Mission held in the new Church building, which is located on Knapp Avenue just off the Lincoln Highway, was on February 4, 1940. A good number of brothers and sisters from the surrounding missions and the New Brunswick Branch were present. The dedication and the meeting were taken care of by Brother Gabriel Mazzeo from New Brunswick, New



Stelton Church Building on Knapp Avenue

Jersey. The Spirit of God was manifested throughout the day, and the gift of tongues was spoken, with the interpretation being, "My people must be one." Also, while prayer was being offered before serving Communion, Brother Turano from New Brunswick, New Jersey saw a personage dressed in white, standing between Brothers Rocco Ensana and Patsy Rogolino. He had a white umbrella and he opened it so that it covered everyone in the building.

Brother Ensana was ordained an evangelist in 1942, and the Stelton, New Jersey Mission became a Branch in 1952. In 1957, the building was extended lengthwise to hold more rows of pews.

(Material for the following three testimonies were compiled by Sister Iva Bordeaux.)

Testimony of Brother Nathan Peterkin

My testimony is that when the humble followers of the Lamb spoke with me, all they would say is, "Come, come to The Church of Jesus Christ, come hear the Gospel preached." Their sincerity and their genuine spirit were very nourishing to me. I was an ordained Baptist Minister, yet these people had something special about them, a strong spirit that made me feel like a sinner . . . I was being drawn by the beautiful spirit which they carried . . . [and] I knew that I was very happy in their presence. I thought that I could preach to them, and even attempted to do so many times. . . Even though I knew there was something special about these people, I was a minister and was proud and certain of my ministry.

Nevertheless, I did go to Church with my neighbors. I thought it strange to feel goodness and love among these people. But I had a great longing in my heart to be with them. I began to attend The Church of Jesus Christ regularly, especially when I was not engaged in my own church. The saints began to tell me to pray and ask God about the Church. They called it, "The True Church, The Restored Gospel."

I had many experiences and dreams during this time while I was attending The Church of Jesus Christ, even though I was still attending my church. . . .

Brother Nathan had a dream, which revealed to him the need to be baptized.

Shortly after I had this experience, I requested my baptism [in 1952]. I gave up my ministry and became a part of The Church of Jesus Christ. My wife also got baptized. I loved the Church and began to share my testimony of God's great love and blessings to me. I immediately called my friend, Cleveland Baldwin. I wanted so desperately for him to obey the Gospel. I would get the brothers together and call my friend. We would talk [of] the Gospel for hours. But my friend had a good knowledge of the scripture and loved to debate with the brothers. He was hard, but little by little his heart began to melt. Many times Brothers Clarence Robinson, Vito Buffa and his son, John, Tony Micale, Pat Renda, Paul Benyola and many others would meet on Saturday evenings to talk [about] the scriptures, but my friend wanted to debate. The brothers were humble and patient. My friend did everything he could think of to me, mocking and scoffing. The day came that he became my brother in Christ. . . .

After Brother Cleve was baptized, we went everywhere together telling our testimony. We were members of Stelton, which now is known as the Edison Branch in New Jersey. I loved to preach this Gospel. It was my delight. The Lord taught and showed us many things. . . .

My daughter, Carmela, had been stricken with a malady, which had caused her face to swell to more than twice its size. The effects of the ailment were so acute she could barely open her eyes. We had friends (not Church members) visit us Saturday evening and they insisted we call a doctor immediately. My wife, however, urged me to call the elders of the Church for anointing first. By Sunday morning, Carmela's condition had not improved. Once again I was visited by a friend who recommended I contact a doctor at once, and my wife was equally persistent that I summon the priesthood. I was impressed this time by the way the world cries, "doctor, doctor," while the faithful and believing turn to the Church and call "Lord, Lord." I finally heeded the pleas of my wife and called Brother Rocco.

At noon, Brothers Rocco Ensana and Patsy Rogolino arrived to anoint Carmela. After they had done so, the change was immediately apparent. When I left for Church about a half hour later, it was certain beyond a doubt my daughter was better and would recover fully. In a matter of hours she had been completely healed with no after effects remaining. Presiding Elder Rocco Ensana corroborated the testimony by declaring it was, indeed, a miracle. He explained how the now normal healthy eight-year-old girl had been almost unrecognizable when he arrived for the anointing. "I could tell from the way the child cried

after [anointing her]. . . that the Spirit of God had blessed her," said Brother Rocco. The tears flowed in such abundance I had no doubt she had been touched and would be healed.

The Testimony of Brother Cleveland Baldwin

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6,7)

The above scripture is the foundation of my testimony. I know now that it was this angel who guided me from my birth to the glorious love and power of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

I was born August 12, 1924 in a small rural town in the western part of Florida called River Junction. At this present time it is known as Chattahoochee, Florida. I experienced the hardships of the poor. However, despite these conditions, those in my presence exhibited values and morals of excellence and strength. This foundation patterned my behavior. Being poor and oftentimes destitute, such a foundation is difficult to destroy.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and [when he is old] he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

Spiritual Roots

My grandparents were deeply devoted and dedicated to the faith, which they claimed. My grandfather was a Baptist minister. I grew up under this influence and was instructed in all the faith and ways of the Baptist doctrine. Poverty did not have the power to rob me of morality because religion and goodness [were] instilled in me. In 1933 I was baptized by immersion into the Baptist Church. I was fourteen years old at the time.

I served in the United States Army from 1943 to 1946. After my discharge from the army, I settled in New Brunswick, New Jersey. May 16, 1947 I married Margaret Hammond who possessed many of the qualities of my grandmother.

Spiritual Quest

Moments of soberness and loneliness for the faith I was taught would plague me from time to time, because I had strayed so far away from my religious teachings; and I knew it. Responding to these feelings, I became a member of Second Baptist Church. I worked diligently in this church. However, the harder I worked, the more dissatisfied I became spiritually. The deep longing in my heart for God and godliness was not being satisfied. It was around this time that I met Nathan Peterkin, who labored with me, telling me of the truth of the Gospel. Many of the brothers and sisters visited me. These old poor people, mostly Italian, in a humble and sincere manner, in broken English would say, "Come to The Church of Jesus Christ. . ." I was a very proud man, an earnest researcher of the scriptures, alert, keen, and very controversial. I challenged the brothers of the Church. . . . I set up barriers that no man could penetrate, only God. . . . Around 1952, I had a dream:

I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven. The angel had a scroll in his mouth and was descending on an angle towards the earth. This was the entire dream. This dream left an everlasting impression in my mind. No one in the Baptist Church or those of the religious world whom I sought could unfold or interpret this dream for me.

The next religious experience I had [occurred] around 1953: In my dream I saw a church building located just outside of the town of New Brunswick, New Jersey. The building inside was completely dark except for the flame of a match, which had been lit. There was just a spark at the top of the match. I saw another church building located to the right of New Brunswick, and it was completely dark. Then I saw another church in the direction of Highland Park, New Jersey, just outside the city. I knew this church to be The Church of Jesus Christ. It was lit all the way to the top except for about a foot from the ceiling. At the top of the building there was a shady overcast, and the light of that part was dim.

I, along with my wife, began to attend services at The Church of Jesus Christ more frequently. I could not only see but could feel the development of a deep and unusual love for the people in this Church. . . .

Still struggling with the truth that was so plain before me, I had many dreams, and the mercy of God was so great toward me. Brother Rocco Ensana encouraged the young brothers to inquire of God concerning their gift. I was not yet baptized in the Church, but, of course,

this aroused my inquisitive mind. Thus I inquired of God concerning my calling. . . .

Brother Cleve had two more dreams, one of which foretold his baptism and the other, his calling as a minister, with specific direction to preach the Gospel in the town of Freehold, New Jersey. He continues:

My vision was beginning to fail and oftimes my wife would read the scriptures to me. Once while she was reading to me Revelation 14th chapter 6th & 7th verses about the angel flying in the midst of heaven, I was overcome by the power and blessing of God. . . . My soul, the inner man, was awakened, as suddenly the dream I had a few years before about the angel flying in the midst of heaven was magnified. At this very moment I was able to realize for the first time that I had seen an angel of God, a celestial being, driven by the hand of God, descending from the very presence of God . . . swiftly in full speed making his flight to earth with a scroll in his mouth. I shall not attempt to paint the feelings of my heart on this occasion, realizing fully the sublime manner of a holy personage, which I saw in my dream. So vivid was this dream that I exclaimed to my companion, "Look, that angel I saw in my dream flying down to earth on an angle with a scroll in his mouth is that the same angel described in the book of Revelation 14th [Chapter 6th and 7th verses] . . . the same scripture on which this Church, The Church of Jesus Christ, bases the Restoration of the Gospel. What a confirmation! Now, where was there room for doubt? "This is no coincidence," I exclaimed! The wall of disbelief and self-will, which I had exercised all my energies to build, was consumed, crumbled into powder and dissipated . . . in attempting to convince my wife of the gospel, the veil was parted and I was not only convinced of The Restoration of the Gospel, but the power of God that accompanied it.

. . . Needless to say, this experience aroused within me a fervent desire, a yearning now for God's presence and to render obedience to the Restored Gospel. I felt ready now. My wife, Margaret, and my mother, Sallie, did not hesitate, and on September 25th, 1955, they both rendered obedience to the Gospel.

Soon after that, my day came. I was experiencing all types of emotions . . . I said: "Lord, I read in your Bible concerning the Holy Ghost. I don't even know if there is such a thing as the Holy Ghost. I don't even know if the Bible is true. . . .

When I arrived at the Church that afternoon, I heard angels singing. I no longer heard the voices of the saints, it was heavenly. . . . For the first time in my life, I was conscious of an inward fire beginning to warm my entire being. This stony heart of mine. . . . I never realized it was so hard . . . began to melt. I could not resist the love which captivated me. . . . I began to weep bitterly. I had lost the ability to contain myself and could no longer control my actions. The saints . . . were singing and bearing testimony. . . . Sister Rose Rogolino . . . called . . . hymn, #221, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are. . . ." The words of the song being sung ripped through my body, [then] I saw Brother Nathan Peterkin upon his feet testifying. You can imagine how I felt. I had taken every opportunity to dispute, contradict, debate and challenge this brother. I would even curse him, belittle him and make light of all that he said or did; yet he continued to pray for me and encourage me. He manifested love in its highest degree. . . . Suddenly, I heard Brother Nathan say: "I KNOW THIS IS THE TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST." This was said with great power and strength. As he spoke these words, a fire lit in my body. I was burning all over, from my head to my toe. (Remember . . . I wanted to know about The Holy Ghost). In the midst of this fire and the power executing it, I heard the voice of God speak, "AND YOU DO KNOW IT TOO. THIS DAY YOU'LL WITNESS ME OR DENY ME. . . ." I was now face to face with truth. . . . Suddenly, as swift as lightning, I found myself on the highest mountain in the whole world. I saw clearly and distinctly before me a chasm with the depth of blackness, which seemed endless! As quickly as these events were happening, my knowledge of what was transpiring was perfect. This was Outer Darkness! If I didn't stand straight up and ask to be baptized, I would fall into outer darkness . . . that chasm. . . . There would be no further opportunity; I would be out of the presence of God forever. . . . Fear took its flight and mercy interceded. The presiding elder was preparing to bring the meeting to a close. I raised my hand, and at the same time getting up. . . . I made my declaration known. . . . That day I requested baptism. I had to wait two weeks. . . .

The day came . . . Sunday morning October 16, 1955 I was baptized by Brother John Buffa. . . . [At the time], I had an experience:

While being immersed under the water, some keys fell from Brother John's hand into my hand. . . .

I testify that immediately I received a consecrated and regenerated heart, ready now to labor for the Lord; however, just as this feeling of spiritual security prevailed in me, another realization was evident. I

became dumb. All my former knowledge of the scriptures seemingly disappeared. I couldn't seem to catch hold [of] the Word of God any more. It wouldn't settle in my heart or mind. This disturbed me greatly, because it was so obvious and so immediate,

During MBA service . . . that evening at Hopelawn Branch . . . I was requested to tell my testimony since I was a new brother. But, how could I? Everything had left me. . . . I was, . . . groping for words. In this state of mind, in a few words I stated that I didn't have a testimony. This not only puzzled me, but worried me deeply. I began to fast and pray. I went to God in sincerity and honesty. I said, "Lord, You told me this is Your Church. I've obeyed You and now I feel dumb as to the Word and spiritual things. . . . I want to know if You have baptized me with your Holy Spirit." Just like I knew I was baptized with water, I wanted to know if I had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . After a day or two, I had a dream:

I found myself lying on the lawn in my front yard under this beautiful apple tree. Some of the brothers from Pennsylvania were there, and we were reading the Scriptures. . . . While reading and discussing the Scriptures, a man and his wife came by. His wife went into the house with the sisters. After introductions and some conversation, the man stated they were from The Pillar Green Church. I could feel immediately a Great Spirit overtake me and I said, "The Pillar Green Church!" Slowly he replied, "Yes." At the same time, as if reading my thoughts, he said, "You think your church is right. You only have a few members in your church, we have many." I could feel this Great Spirit taking complete control of me, overshadowing me. I began to speak with power and authority. "Yes, true, you have many members in your church because you're dead! Where the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. You're dead; therefore, you have many members." I further explained, "There are two or three gathered together in my name, touching and agreeing, I'll be in their midst. [These are the words of Jesus.] That is The Church of Jesus Christ!" I awoke. My room was all lit up, shining brighter than the sun at noonday. The light was a blaze of shining splendor, so full of luster that it overpowered me. . . .

After this experience, my previous spiritual knowledge began to be unfolded to me, but in a reverent manner. I began to develop a deeper . . . understanding of the scriptures. From that time on, The Restored Gospel became the essence and core element of my life. . . . Restoration is my theme.

I was baptized in the Church one week, and the next week I was about seven hundred miles away from my family witnessing this Gospel in Summerton, South Carolina, along with Brother Clarence Robinson and Brother Nathan Peterkin. . . . I . . . also made many trips to . . . Florida with Brother Clarence. I . . . developed a philosophy and I enjoyed the benefits of that philosophy: "No price is too great or no distance too far when the love of God is in effect."

In April 1962, I was ordained into God's Holy Priesthood. Brother Rocco Ensana officiated.

In October 1970, Brother Cleve was ordained into the Quorum of Seventies. More of his testimony will be forthcoming in the next volume.

Brother Arthur Searcy

Brother Arthur Searcy, also an African American, was born in Guilford County, North Carolina on April 28, 1918. He served in World War II from early 1942 through 1945. In November of 1948 he moved to New Jersey, and in 1955 he met The Church of Jesus Christ. Brothers Tony Ensana and August D'Orazio introduced him to the Church.

Brother Arthur was baptized on January 27th, 1957 by Brother Nathan Peterkin and confirmed by Brother Rocco Ensana. He was ordained an elder by Brother Cleve Baldwin on April 19, 1981. He has maintained his membership in the Edison, New Jersey Branch.

In 1955 when Brother Arthur was introduced to the Gospel, his whole family began to attend Church. Brother Art continued to attend the Church because he believed in the Restoration of the Gospel, but it was two years before he felt ready to be baptized. Mrs. Searcy attended until Brother Art was baptized.

The week of Brother Arthur's baptism was very cold and there was ice in the water. He was afraid and asked the Lord to help him if he had to go into the cold water. One night that week, an angel sang, "Amazing Grace" to him, and throughout the week he felt the calling of the Lord, and the fear began to dissipate. The day of his baptism, he went into the water, as cold as it was, and he came out of the water steaming.

In the words of Brother Arthur:

At age 14, I envisioned a pure gospel on earth, but never thought I would see it in my day. But now I am a part of it. Thank God for His mercy.

THE METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY BRANCH

(This material was compiled by Brother Carmen Sgro.)

In 1930, Amelio Cantamessa, his wife Dianna, and their daughter Santina from Oak Tree, New Jersey were baptized into the Church. Shortly after their baptisms, meetings were held in their home. The elders who started this work were Brothers Rocco Ensana and Louis Mazzeo, along with Carmen Sgro (not an elder at this time), with a total membership of only six in the beginning. It was difficult to travel to Brother Cantamessa's home in those days, since it was necessary to take a bus from New Brunswick to Metuchen (about six miles northeast) and then walk due north approximately two and a half miles. On Wednesday and Friday nights, the brothers would leave their place of employment and go directly to Oak Tree, New Jersey. For supper, they brought an extra sandwich and ate it on their two-and-a-half mile walk through all kinds of weather. They were few in number, but the blessings were many.

Two Early Experiences of the Power of God

Related by Brother Carmen Sgro

It was during a torrential rain that Brother Amelio called Brother Louis Mazzeo to anoint his small daughter. She was sick with a high fever, and they feared for her life. Brother Louis Mazzeo arrived at their home very wet, with mud over his ankles. Before entering the home, he fell to his knees outside and offered a prayer to the Lord for the child, and that His Spirit would accompany him. Entering the home, he took the lifeless body of the young girl in his arms, and, as he offered his prayer to the Lord, the child jumped down onto the floor,

healed. She called to her mother, "I'm hungry, I want to eat!" This is only one of the great wonders that God performed in our midst.

Another time, on a Sunday morning, we assembled as usual in Brother and Sister Cantamessa's home to hold our service. Neither of the Elders, Rocco Ensana and Louis Mazzeo, were able to open the service. We just sat there, not knowing what was wrong, until Brother Rocco Ensana, was inspired by the Spirit of the Lord that someone in the room was not right before God. He asked the guilty to announce himself and repent before God. A brother who had been baptized recently declared himself, saying, "This morning I blasphemed the name of God." He asked forgiveness, and the elders prayed over him that God would have mercy on him.

After they prayed, Brother Mazzeo introduced the service and, while praying, spoke in the Gift of Tongues. He then began to sing under the influence of the Spirit of God. His singing lasted about ten minutes; it was not Brother Mazzeo's voice, but a voice that we had never heard. We had one of the most enjoyable and blessed meetings that I can remember. Our labors were rewarded by the abundance of God's blessings in Oak Tree.

The work moved south from Oak Tree, New Jersey in 1930. A small store was rented on Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen, New Jersey. This relocation was a result of a dream by Brother Louis Mazzeo, concerning bringing the Gospel to a man named Dominick Scala of Metuchen.

In 1930, Dominick attended The Church of Jesus Christ for the first time and neither accepted nor rejected it as the Gospel Restored. While in this frame of mind, he experienced the following:

"I felt a finger on my head and a voice saying, 'Listen and obey, that when you stand before the Lord you can say, I was obedient to Thy call.'"

Brother Dominick Scala visited the meetings while they were being held on Middlesex Avenue. The elders continued to visit him and his family every night for a week, explaining the Gospel in its fullness. They visited Church on the following Sunday. The words brought joy to their hearts and the desire to be part of His Church. This great privilege, which was given to few, was now offered to the Scalas. Brother Dominick and his daughter Margaret were baptized by Brother Eugene Perri, Sr. in May of 1930.

Sister Margaret Scala Benyola: Touched by the Hand of God

Sister Margaret Scala was born on October 20, 1914 in Brooklyn, New York. Her parents were Dominick and Florence Scala, and she was the second oldest of nine children. She had six sisters, Mildred, Rose, Theresa, Sophie, Julia, and Mary, and two brothers, Paul and Litterine. A miraculous event occurred in 1924 when Margaret was ten years old and her sister Rose (Risola) was seven. Their eight-year-old brother accidentally hit them with the blast of a shotgun. Rose lost half of one finger, and Margaret was critically wounded, badly shot in her upper leg. The family rushed the girls to the hospital in a taxicab (there were no ambulances available in those days). The doctor there told her parents that Margaret needed an immediate skin graft or she would not survive. Her parents, Dominick and Florence, were wondering how they would manage to care for the rest of their large family if one of them were operated on to provide the skin graft.

A man by the name of Mr. Merritt, a stranger to the Scalas but not to God, heard about this tragedy and volunteered to donate his skin to be grafted onto Margaret's. The area affected was large, and the grafting techniques of the day (this was 1924) were crude and painful. Margaret's sister Rose was present in the room when the operation took place. Mr. Merritt was touched by the hand of God to go to that hospital and volunteer to give his skin to save the life of a young girl whom he had never met. God is aware of each of His children's needs!

After the successful operation, Mr. Merritt brought many presents to Margaret over the years and was a friend to her all the days of his life. He wanted no money. To show her appreciation, Margaret's mother, Sister Florence, planted white roses around Mr. Merritt's home for many years.

The Scala family moved to Metuchen, New Jersey in 1928. In 1930, after being introduced to the Restored Gospel at the age of 16, Sister Margaret was baptized along with her father, Brother Dominick. She married Brother Joseph Benyola in 1932. She was a helpmate to her husband and was ordained a deaconess in the Church. She bore four

daughters: Mary, Florence, Sharon, and Judy; and one son, Paul. She was also blessed with several grandchildren. She had a pleasant and friendly disposition and welcomed all to their home. Although her husband, Brother Joe, was taken home at the early age of 52 and she was left with young children, she never complained, and God always provided for her natural and spiritual needs. As a young girl, Sister Margaret's life was spared because God had a plan for her, and she was obedient to His commandments.

Brother Dominick Scala's Testimony

A few weeks after I obeyed the Gospel, my entire family was healed from an affliction. My wife, seven children, two grandchildren and I were sick with Scarlet Fever. The Board of Health had quarantined our house. Because of this action, we were not able to attend the Sunday service. Our absence became apparent, and the brothers and sisters came to our home. Disregarding the quarantine sign that was posted, they came in and offered prayers on our behalf. Brother Louis Mazzeo anointed eleven of us. One by one, we arose from our beds, healed from Scarlet Fever. We thank God for such great power and healings.

With these manifestations of the Spirit of God in our hearts, Brother Louis Mazzeo and I began to consider building a Church building because our present location was fast becoming inadequate. I had sufficient ground and made it available for this purpose. It was located behind my home. When completed, we had a small building twelve feet by twenty feet. This building was dedicated to the service of God in 1930, with a wonderful representation of brothers and sisters from Detroit, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, including the president of the Church, Brother William H. Cadman, and his wife, Sister Sadie. Apostle Joseph Corrado was the main speaker, and everyone present was filled with the blessings of God.

We held meetings in this building for approximately 14 years. As we continued to increase in numbers, the building became too small. I wondered, "What next?" Then one day, the Lord moved upon me with an inspiration to look for a new location. In His own mysterious way, He prepared the lots on the corner of Hampton and Amboy Avenues. All this happened to me during the Depression, but the Lord provided five dollars for me. With this money I bought a pickup truck. I went

from place to place, in every field, on the highways, and everywhere, collecting all kinds of plain, smooth stones. I stored them on the ground that was dedicated for the new building. My son, Paul, my daughters, and I, with many brothers including the three Cantamessa brothers, helped to construct the Church building on Hampton and Amboy Avenues (now New Durham Road). The building was 24 by 36 feet. It is sturdy, with stone walls two feet thick. By the providence of God, the material and finances were abundantly provided. A nearby factory that had been damaged by fire gave us the material for the roof and the inside walls. My brother-in-law August Easso, not a member of the Church, donated his labor and plastered the walls of the building inside and outside. The work was completed in 1944, and the building was dedicated to the service of the Lord. Metuchen became a Branch on October 14, 1956.

During the span from 1944 to 1960, the Metuchen Branch membership ranged from 20 to 25 members.

“I Was Hungry and You Fed Me”

Sister Stella Benyola retells a remarkable experience received by her mother, Sister Stella Arcuri, on October 11, 1928, the day she was to be baptized. This was not a dream or a vision, but according to her testimony, an actual visitation by a messenger of God who, in the opinion of many, could have been one of the three Nephites:

I was alone in my kitchen on Sunday morning getting ready for church. Suddenly I heard a knock at the front door. It was an old man dressed very poorly, asking for something to eat.

I suddenly felt a peace come over me, and did not feel afraid at all. I invited him in and asked him to sit at the kitchen table. As I was preparing his breakfast, he began talking to me. He told me many things written in the Bible, and even told me that he knew I was getting baptized that day. I asked him how he knew all these things and where he came from. He told me that he lived way up on top of the mountain and he knew everything about me and the Church I was getting baptized into.

He said so many things I could not remember them all. When he finished eating, he got up and said he had to go, but, before he left, he said, “I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink.” He said goodbye and left.

I went to the front door to see which way he went, and by the time I got to the door he was already gone, as if he had suddenly disappeared. I went back into the kitchen to clear the table, but to my surprise, when I picked up the dish he ate from, it broke in half, and when I picked up the knife and fork, they also broke in half. (*The Gospel News*, August 1987, p. 3)

THE HOPELAWN, NEW JERSEY BRANCH

Testimony of Brother Vincent James Mercurio

In 1930, I was working with a man named Dominick Scala who lived in Metuchen. There was no steady work in those days; when a job was finished, we would both have to look for more work. We became friends, and when Dominick would find work, he would always call me to go with him.

Brother Louis Mazzeo was inspired by the Lord to bring the Gospel to Dominick and, after he was baptized, Brother Mazzeo asked Brother Dominick if he knew of anyone who would like to hear the Gospel. Brother Dominick answered, "Yes, Jimmy Mercurio."

I was working in South Amboy at the time.

After a full day of unloading cement, I was very tired and went to bed very early that evening. About a half hour later, there was a knock on the door. My first wife, Anna, who was still living at that time, looked out of the window and called to me, "Jim, Dominick Scala is here; he must have work for you!" I got up. Brother Dominick was with Brother Louis Mazzeo. I asked him if he had work for me. He replied, "I have something better than a job; better than gold!" I asked, "Better than gold?" and he said, "I found the Church of the Living God." I asked, "How about the Catholic Church?" He said, "Better."

Brother Mazzeo started to read from the Bible. Then they noticed that I was so exhausted I could not stay awake. Brother Louie said that, if I would let them, they would return another time. As they were leaving, Brother Dominick said to me, "You know the kind of man I was!"

A week or so later, Brother Louie and Brother Dominick came back. They sat at the kitchen table, and I stood with my back towards the stove. As Brother Mazzeo was talking, I saw a man dressed in white, with a long beard, coming down a stone stairway that was curved like an "S." He had a cane in his hand and was descending one step at a time

and pointing his finger at me with the other hand. I passed my hand over my eyes to see if I was sleeping. I thought to myself, "This is the second time these men are here and I am falling asleep again." I passed my hand over my eyes four times to make sure I was awake. Then the man disappeared.

The brothers then invited me to Church. They were meeting in Metuchen, five miles to the west. Brother Dominick said he would pick me up and bring me back home, and that it wouldn't cost me any money (this was during the Depression). Brother Dominick owned a Hudson automobile at that time. My wife, Anna, said, "If that Church is good for you, then it is good for me." My daughter Mary (Feher) was six years old at the time.

On my fourth visit to The Church of Jesus Christ, I got up and asked for my baptism. On December 6, 1930, I was baptized by Brother Louis Mazzeo. After my baptism, I stopped smoking, and I quit getting drunk, playing cards, gambling, and using bad language.

I wanted to take the Gospel to my brothers. Brothers Louis, Dominick, and John Cantamessa came with me to my brother Joe's house. My widowed mother, Maria Mercurio, was staying there at that time. When we arrived, I found my mother very ill. She had to sleep in a rocking chair for three weeks because she couldn't breathe lying down. I immediately told Brother Louie to anoint my mother so that she could sleep properly in a bed. She was anointed and she did sleep in the bed that night. In the morning, she awoke refreshed, praising God.

A few weeks later, it was my turn to have my mother stay at my home for a while. She asked, "Jimmy, what kind of church do you belong to?" I answered, "I belong to The True Church of Jesus Christ." She then asked if she could come with me to church. On her third visit to the Church, she got up and said, "If you people serve the Living God, then this is the God I am looking for." She was baptized at the age of 76 in the month of February. Five of us brothers in the Church had to work for an hour breaking ice over 12 inches thick with a pipe. It was so cold that day that as my mother was coming out of the water, it began freezing on her dress. They were trying to keep her warm and she told them not to worry; she felt as though she just came out of the furnace.

Testimony of Brother Joseph P. Benyola

Brother Joseph P. Benyola was born in a log cabin in Milltown, New Jersey on November 20, 1912. He was the son of Paul and Marie Benyola, who emigrated from Naples, Italy in 1904. Brother Joe and his three older brothers, Louis, John (Rocco), and Anthony, along with his sister, Catherine (the oldest), moved with their parents to Hopelawn, where another sister, Jennie, and another brother, Sam, were born in 1915 and 1918.

When I was a young man of 18 my natural ambition was to further my career as a barbershop owner. I was working long hours and would come home for supper between 8:00 and 9:00 each evening. For two weeks during the summer of 1931, I saw my father and mother talking in the evening with three men, Dominick Scala, Louis Mazzeo, and Jim Mercurio, in their back yard. This was during the Depression, and there were many illegal schemes being carried out by people who were taking advantage of persons who could not read English. Our parents had come from Italy, and I thought these men were trying to get them to sign papers giving them control of the house or some other illegal scheme.

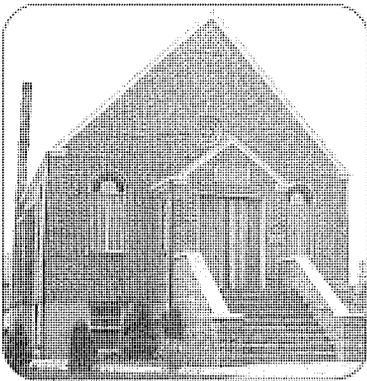
When I approached my parents and asked them what was going on, they replied that these men were talking about The Church of Jesus Christ and the wonderful blessings and miracles they were receiving in the Church. I found out later that these men were brothers in the Church. My mother was always extremely devout in her religion; she attended services seven days a week, and faithfully prayed to the many "saints" that covered the walls of her bedroom. My father was a tough man who was not overly religious. To my surprise, they both began to attend church meetings in Metuchen, New Jersey.

One time my brother, Tony, asked if I wanted to go with him to pick them up from a church service. I agreed to do so. He said that the church building was located behind Dominick Scala's house. I was used to large, magnificent churches, and when I saw their simple building, I asked, "What kind of church is this?" Being somewhat ashamed to be seen there, I parked about a block away and waited for them to walk out to the street. I picked them up and drove them home, still somewhat bewildered by the change in my parents. I didn't realize at the time that

two years later I would marry Brother Dominick Scala's daughter, Margaret.

After a few months, my father and mother asked for their baptisms. This was a big decision for my mother, and after wrestling with the doubts and fears of changing their religion, they both were baptized. The first meeting place in the Hopelawn area was at 24 Columbus Avenue in Fords, New Jersey, which was the home of Brother Jim Mercurio and his family. As the little congregation grew, my father, Paul, received a revelation to build a place of worship. His reply to the Lord was, "I don't have any property." The answer came, "You have five garages, take two and build a place of worship." My father said, "I have no money." Again God replied, "You start, and I will help you."

My brothers and sisters and I were against my father in this matter. It was during the Depression, and families were trying to survive on \$12.00 per week. We tried to talk my father out of it, but he was resolute in his determination to build a church and stated that he would not be deterred. In obedience to the Lord's voice, he converted a shed building at the rear of our home at 389 Florida Grove Road in Hopelawn to a place of worship.



Hopelawn Church Building on
Florida Grove Road

The meeting place was completed in three months and was dedicated on December 6, 1931. On that day my sister, Jennie Benyola (later Purkall), was bap-

tized. I still believed that these people were trying to deceive my parents. I began to study The Book of Mormon that was given to them with the intention of proving it wrong. After I read The Book of Mormon from cover to cover, however, I became convinced that these were good people and I wanted to hear more of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was baptized in April of 1932.

On June 18, 1932, 22 charter members were transferred from the New Brunswick Mission to the Hopelawn Mission, then known as the Ford's Corner Mission, with Brother Louis Mazzeo as presiding elder. The following were the charter members: Vincent Calantoni, Caroline Calantoni, Victor Calantoni, Olga Calantoni, Paul Benyola, Maria

Benyola, Dominick Calabro, Catherine (Benyola) Calabro, Anthony Benyola, Josephine Benyola, Joseph Benyola, Jennie Benyola, John Karos, Louis Mazzeo, Michael DiNapoli, Jennie DiNapoli, Vincent James Mercurio, Anna Mercurio, Anthony Mercurio, Maria Mercurio, Antonio Cucicca, and Catina Bubiccia.

(After their initial objections, all of my natural brothers and sisters and their spouses eventually became members of the Church.) I was ordained an elder in 1933 and an evangelist in 1934. The membership of the Hopelawn Mission had increased to 60 by 1935. About this time, my father, Brother Paul Benyola, was again inspired by God, this time to purchase the corner property of Florida Grove Road and Worden Avenue for the sum of \$250.

The Church Building in Hopelawn, New Jersey

On March 30, 1940, Brothers Louis Mazzeo and Jim Mercurio applied to the Township of Woodbridge for a building permit. The Hopelawn Mission began to build their present church building on this site, 393 Florida Grove Road, in April of that year. Masons were hired to do the brickwork at wages of \$1.00 per hour, amounting to \$100 per week. These wages were paid by Brothers Paul Benyola, Joseph Kowalczyk, and John Karos. The members donated whatever they had and worked day and night constructing the building. Brother Joseph Benyola closed his barber shop each day from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to assist in building the church. All work on the building other than the brickwork was done by the brothers of the area. The completed cost of the new building was approximately \$6,000. On January 11, 1942, General Church President Brother William H. Cadman officiated at the dedication service of the new church building in Hopelawn. The first baptism there was Brother Frank Calabro on June 14, 1944, by Brother Gabriel Mazzeo.

The Hopelawn Mission was organized as a branch on January 9, 1948, with Brother Joseph Benyola as presiding elder and Brothers Julius Sipos and V. James Mercurio as counselors. The membership grew to over 90 members. Hopelawn became the Atlantic Coast District headquarters. At various times, the Metuchen, New Jersey; Brooklyn, New York; Washington, D.C. (later Herndon, Virginia); Freehold, New Jersey; and Dallas, Texas missions were cared for under the auspices of the Hopelawn Branch.

In 1939, land was purchased from the Township of Woodbridge on Oregon Avenue in Fords, New Jersey for the sum of \$225, which was donated by a brother of the Hopelawn Mission to be used as a Church cemetery.

Brother Joseph Benyola retained the position of presiding elder for several years, and also started the New Jersey Choir, which had 75 members from all the missions. He drove a large Packard automobile, and transportation being limited in those days, he was able to transport over ten young people at a time in that car to choir and MBA meetings. The choir's singing was filled with the Spirit of God. They recorded hymns, and these recordings were a blessing to many people.

Miraculous Healing of Paul J. Benyola

On a Monday evening, October 9, 1950, as Brother Joe and Sister Margaret Benyola were returning home from the General Church Conference, a 1936 Ford pulled away from the Edison (Stelton) Branch of the Church after a choir practice. Three teenage boys were piled into the front seat of the old car: Nick Persico in the driver's seat, George Benyola in the passenger seat, and 12 year old Paul Benyola sitting in between. A few minutes later, disaster struck as the car collided head-on with another vehicle. All three boys were injured and a six-year-old boy in the other car was killed. George wound up with a broken leg and Nick had a concussion, but Paul was hurt the worst of the three, as he was knocked unconscious and suffered a concussion, a broken arm, a broken leg, and a broken jaw.

Paul's parents, Brother Joe and Sister Margaret, arrived home to hear the news of their son's grave condition. The doctor told them that it would only be a matter of a day or so before death came. Brother Joe anointed Paul and the other young men, and requested that the Church fast and pray for them. Five days passed and Paul still hadn't regained consciousness. The doctors hadn't even bothered to set his broken limbs, as they were certain he wouldn't survive the accident. Paul's parents stayed by his bedside and Sister Margaret had a vision in which she saw all the

prayers of the saints ascending to heaven as a bouquet of flowers. This vision was truly from God, as the prayers were answered in a miraculous way. Paul finally regained consciousness and the doctors went to work setting his broken limbs and wiring his jaw. He couldn't eat solid food for about eight weeks, but, by December, only two months after the accident, Paul was out sledding with his friends, totally healed. God had performed a miracle!

Conversion of Brother Paul J. Benyola

Six years later, at the age of 18, Paul voluntarily enlisted in the army. "I wanted to see the world and be sort of like the Prodigal Son," he remarked. "I always thought the Prodigal Son lived an exciting life and I wanted to experience some of it, forgetting that he eventually wound up feeding the swine."

Paul was to be stationed in Massachusetts and, as he was leaving, his father entreated him to take his Bible along with him. Paul didn't want to take it, as he felt that the other men in the barracks would make fun of him if they saw him reading the Bible. Brother Joe insisted, so Paul relented and took his Bible, stowing it in the bottom of his footlocker.

Later that year, in November of 1956, the New Jersey local hosted the GMBA Conference. Paul had looked forward to going home on leave and visiting with his friends but because of a speck of dust found on his shoes, he didn't pass inspection that week and was confined to the base for the weekend. Sitting in the deserted bunkhouse on Sunday morning, Paul thought about the brothers and sisters meeting together in New Jersey. It was then that he remembered the Bible in the bottom of his footlocker. He took it out, opened it, and began reading the New Testament. When he reached the third chapter of Matthew, verse 10, which states, "... every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," something happened.

When I read that verse, I was immediately converted. I began shedding tears, which was the first and only time I have ever shed tears when reading scripture. I knew that I was going the wrong way and I changed

my life from that point on. I also became fearful and prayed to the Lord that He would spare my life until I could return home and be baptized. After all the opportunities to be baptized I had let pass by, I now had to wait to do it.

Meanwhile, back in New Jersey, the Spirit of God was moving upon those gathered for the GMBA Conference, and there were many who asked for their baptisms that day. Paul had to wait about six weeks, but he finally entered the waters of baptism with his natural father on December 31, 1956. It was the coldest day of the year and ice formed on his hair as he came out of the water, but he didn't feel cold at all.

Paul did indeed change his life when he returned to the service, refraining from the things his friends were doing and withstanding their taunting. When he was in Hawaii, Paul received a letter from his father, which encouraged him and gave him the spiritual strength he needed to press on. In the letter, Brother Joe quoted the familiar lines of Hymn #326 in the Saints Hymnal:

*Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you, Some other to win.*

Continuing Ministry of Brother Joseph P. Benyola

Brother Joe and Sister Margaret Benyola were devoted to the work of the Lord. They had a great respect for all people. All were welcomed in their home, and even though they were not rich in natural wealth, they would give them the best that they had. Brother Joe had the respect of those whom he served. About this time there was a great movement in preaching the Gospel to the Puerto Rican community in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, right across the town line from the Hopelawn Branch. A Puerto Rican brother recounts,

The first time I met Brother Joseph Benyola, a powerful voice told me, "Here is one of My true servants." When I met him I was a poor lost sinner, a man in distress, without hope and above all a man without the Lord. It was in his home that my family and I first visited as friends in this blessed land of America. How surprised my family and I were

when we found in his home the genuine love of God! I can never forget how he received us, especially me.

How kind, sweet, and soft his voice was. His words began to encircle me in the form of a wave. This was something that suddenly opened my heart. His words began to penetrate my mind. I felt so happy because I had found a friend. The kindness of his words was decorated with the melody of truth, which was that authority that was upon this servant whom the Most High God had entrusted to bring me the truth of the Gospel. When he finished speaking I stretched forth my hand, asking him the question, "Can I call you my brother?"

How can I forget that moment? As Brother Joe looked at me, I was so happy. I had tears in my eyes. My heart was beating hard, my voice was lost, and I looked at him. Brother Joe was smiling as he pulled me close to him and very softly said, "Yes, my friend, you can call me Brother Joseph. This is your home, and may God Bless you, Brother Frank Rivera." How could I ever forget the love of this brother? In Brother Benyola I found the type and shadow of an apostle, a man that was living in the world and serving the world, but was not of the world. I close by saying that Brother Joseph Benyola was a true servant of the Lord.

Brother Joe was a mentor to the young people in the district helping many of them to become more involved in the Church. In 1960, Brother Joe was elected the first district president of the Atlantic Coast District, which at that time covered the area from Maine to Florida. He held and faithfully performed many offices in the Church and was instrumental in teaching the hymns to the members from the first Saints Hymnal printed with music. Brother Joe was able to play music on the mandolin, and even though he did not play the piano, he taught his daughters Mary and Florence to play hymns on the piano seasoned with the Spirit.



Joseph and Margaret Benyola and children: Paul, Mary (Perri) and (baby) Florence (Perri)

Brother Joe recognized the need for scriptural references combining The Book of Mormon and the Bible, with specific references to the Restored Gospel. He worked on this project for several years, and in 1956 he compiled a Pocket Reference Book of the Bible and The Book of Mormon. The preface reads: "This Pocket Reference is compiled with the hope that it may serve as a guide, to various subjects in the scriptures, which you may have occasion to use in your endeavors in the Church or amongst the world." The Pocket Reference book was published by the Church in 1956.

In God's plan, Brother Joseph Benyola's life on this earth would be shortened to just 52 years. His death came at his home on July 12, 1964, surrounded by his family and many brothers, sisters, and friends. They sang hymns of praise and gave inspiring testimonies. The last days of his life were a living testimony of his strong foundation in The Church of Jesus Christ. He never offered a complaint but instead demonstrated, through action, the faith that he preached all of his life. He did not leave much in the material aspects of wealth, but the spiritual heritage he bequeathed still lives on in the memories of those whose lives were touched by him.

Preservation of Life and Healing Experienced

By Brother Joseph Perri

During the summer of 1958, our branch in Hopelawn, New Jersey decided to renovate our building and purchase new church furniture, pews, sacrament table, pulpit, and piano. Work began in the fall of that year. Preparations were made for equipment to be brought in to assist in making our job a little easier.

One Saturday, a group of brothers decided to assemble together to start painting the walls and ceiling before the new furniture arrived. A brother from the area who was in the painting business lent us some scaffolding to use for the walls, because they were nearly 12 feet high. The scaffolding would make it much easier and quicker for us as we would not have to climb up and down the ladder so often. The scaffold was set up to a height of about nine feet. At this height we would be able to paint not only the walls but do part of the ceiling as well.

Before starting our day's activities, we prayed for God's protection. After the scaffolding had been assembled and put in place, and the paint pails and brushes prepared, Brother Wally Cihomsky climbed the ladder to take his position on the scaffold. When I saw that he was positioned on the scaffold I proceeded to climb the ladder up to the top of the scaffold to commence painting. Once in position, I took a few strokes with the paintbrush when all of a sudden the scaffold began to break apart and fall. Because of the way he was positioned, Brother Wally was able to land almost upright on his feet. However, the way I was positioned on the scaffold, I could not balance myself and I fell backwards, landing on my back across the upright backs of two rows of attached wooden theater-style seats.

When this happened, the other brothers came running over to see what had happened and if we were hurt. I must have groaned some and was not moving. I heard a brother say, "Call for an ambulance!" Upon hearing that, I said, "Don't call for an ambulance, but call for the brothers of the ministry to come and anoint me."

Immediately, brothers were dispatched to call for the ministry to convey to them what had happened and that I had requested for them to come and anoint me. I lay still for a while, between the twisted metal frames and broken wood from the seating and scaffold, as I had some pain and was somewhat shaken because of what had happened. After some time passed, I requested the brothers to help me up so I could sit, awaiting the ministry to come.

Within a short time, two of the branch ministry arrived. They were Brothers Joseph Benyola (my father-in-law) and James Mercurio. Both of them lived a few blocks away from the Church building. I was anointed with oil and a prayer was offered, pleading with God that this unfortunate accident would not cause me to have any broken bones or a lasting injury to any part of my body, and that the existing pain would be taken away and that it would not be necessary for me to be taken to the hospital. After the prayer was ended, I sat for a while longer and, as requested in the prayer, it was not necessary for me to be taken to the hospital. God had seen our faith and had answered our prayer!

Having sat for a while and not feeling any pain or discomfort from the fall, I arose and went over to look at the damaged seating and broken scaffold. I had much to reflect upon and thanked God for the miraculous way in which He spared me from serious injury. Several rows of broken seating had to be removed from the main auditorium part of the building, and the remaining portion of the scaffold was discarded. A few months later, with the building painted, our new furniture was installed.

Calling into the Priesthood

Brother Joseph Perri was recommended to be ordained into the priesthood in 1958. His ordination took place on October 12, 1958 at the Hopelawn, New Jersey Branch. He was ordained by his father, Evangelist Eugene Perri, Sr.

THE BRONX, NEW YORK BRANCH

The Bronx Branch started as a mission under the jurisdiction of the New Brunswick, NJ Branch. Meetings began to be held in 1936, in a storefront on East 187th Street near Hoffman Street. There were about ten members at that time, all of whom had been baptized at the Brooklyn Mission.

One of these members was Sister Carmella Figola, who visited some of her neighbors from the old neighborhood. She visited Genoeffa Mazzucci, who was a tenant in the home of Gelsomina Zinzi Rotella. While Sister Figola was visiting with Mrs. Mazzucci, she invited Mrs. Rotella to come upstairs and hear her testimony. Sister Figola made an appointment with Mrs. Rotella and Mrs. Figola to have her minister, Brother Frank Braiotta, come and fully explain the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



The Bronx Church Building on East 217th Street

At this meeting were Mr. and Mrs. Rotella and Mr. and Mrs. Mazzucci. They enjoyed Brother Braiotta's words so much that they began to attend services at the storefront.

After a few meetings, on January 23, 1938, Mr. and Mrs. Rotella were baptized. Brother Frank Braiotta then started to visit the home of Sister Rotella. During his visits, he also spoke to her daughter-in-law and sons, Pearl and Nick Zinzi and Joseph Zinzi, who lived in the same house.

On November 13, 1938, Pearl Zinzi, Joseph Zinzi, and Genoeffa Mazzucci were baptized. Since they were having trouble with the neighborhood children at the storefront, Sister Rotella offered her basement for holding meetings.

Sister Rotella was inspired to bring her testimony to many friends and they attended Church services and were baptized. The basement where the meetings were being held was no longer large enough to accommodate everyone.

The Church building at 751 East 217th Street was then purchased to hold services. It was opened on September 22, 1940.

The Bronx Mission was organized as a Branch on January 27, 1948.

THE FREEHOLD, NEW JERSEY BRANCH

In the fall of 1955, Cleveland Baldwin was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ as a member of the Edison, New Jersey Branch. At this time, he received a revelation that resulted in taking the Gospel to Freehold, New Jersey. Brother Cleveland dreamed that he was leaving the town of Freehold after visiting friends and relatives there. He was headed home to North Stelton, about 25 miles to the north. After he was about halfway home, the roads began to be flooded. There was a woman standing on the side of the road who wanted a ride to Freehold. Although the roads were flooded, the home in which the woman lived was untouched, since it had been built higher up than the surrounding areas. Since Brother Cleveland was newly baptized, he felt compelled to help the woman; however he didn't want to go back to Freehold. The woman began to

insist to Brother Cleve, "Take me to Freehold, take me to Freehold!" She also stated, however, that she wanted someone to take her there of their own free will and accord. In this dream, Brother Cleveland saw that the woman's house was for sale. She told him that not only did she own the house, but thousands of acres of land, and that he could build many homes for his people if he bought it. Just as she said this, Brother Cleveland saw white houses all in a perfect line in back of her house. At this point the dream ended.

When he told the elders of the Edison Branch of this experience, Brother John Buffa expressed his feeling that the dream meant Brother Cleve should bring the Restored Gospel to Freehold. Since Brother Cleveland had been baptized as a child in the Second Baptist Church in Freehold many years prior, he feared persecution in bringing the Restored Gospel there. Brother Cleveland could not get this dream out of his mind, so one Sunday after church, he went with his wife, Sister Margaret, and their children to Freehold to see how the Lord would direct them. They did not have much success, so he went into prayer that God would more clearly reveal His purposes and give them direction.

Shortly afterward, Brother Frank Rogolino expressed a desire to join Brother Cleveland in bringing the Gospel to Freehold. These two brothers would go night and day to talk to people in Freehold of the Restored Gospel. Brother Matthew Rogolino, Brother Frank's brother, had been praying and helping to finance the work in Freehold, but the brothers asked him to become more involved. They told him, "We don't want your money, we want you." It is worth noting that none of these three brothers held any ordained offices at the time, but the Lord blessed them with many experiences to keep them going.

Sister Bessie Burke tells of the times she would walk all alone praying, "Lord, will you please send a people here that stand up for the Truth?" When she met the brothers and heard their prayer, she was touched.

Soon after the initial meeting, Brothers Baldwin and Rogolino began to hold meetings in Sister Burke's home, with the elders of the Edison Branch. After a period of struggles and disappointments, they began to

experience some success. It was found that their greatest strength came from fasting and prayer.

These Signs Shall Follow Them

Related by Matthew Rogolino

I remember the times when I was with them, that we would stop our car before entering the Borough of Freehold and pray, "Oh Lord, be with us tonight." God went before us and signs followed us.

There was a time when we were sent to the home of a woman whose three children had contracted polio. After we prayed in her home, her children were healed. A week later we returned and found the children playing outside.

We were sent to another woman's home to talk to her about the Gospel. When she saw us, she told us she didn't want to be bothered. Somehow, she felt she knew us from somewhere. As we talked, she promised to come to Church with us in Edison. When she saw our Church building, she remembered a dream she had two weeks before she met us. She dreamed she saw us come to her door and tell her about the Church. We then brought her to our Church. She said in the dream, Don't bring me here, but bring the Church to where I'm at!

Another convert joined the Church in 1958, Sister Josephine Hicks. Dissatisfied with the church she was attending, she had decided to start



Freehold Church Building on Factory Street

her own church in her home. Sister Josephine was very knowledgeable of the scriptures. When Brothers Baldwin and Rogolino visited her church and gave her their testimony, she immediately believed and exclaimed, "I traveled all over looking for the true people of God and could not find them; but they found me." She turned her church over to The Church of Jesus Christ. At first, meetings were held in her home and in Sister Bessie Burke's home, and then entirely in Sister Burke's home. Years later, Sister Josephine had an experience, which prompted Brother Nathan Peterkin to start a work in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where a mission of the Church now exists.

There were many converts during this time. Truly God had a plan for Freehold, just as Brother Cleveland's dream pointed out. In 1965, they obtained a storefront, and in 1967, they got permission to buy their present building on Factory Street in Freehold.

Freehold was organized as an Established Mission on September 26, 1972. It was formally organized as a Branch on March 19, 1974.

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA MISSION

The Church gained a foothold in the State of Florida in May of 1946 when Brother Frank Sirangelo began holding meetings in West Palm Beach. Also attending those early meetings were Sister Rose Sirangelo, Brother Nick Faragasso and his wife, and Brother Ernie Schultz. In the General Church Conference of July 1947, the West Palm Beach Mission was established and meetings were held in Brother Sirangelo's home every Sunday for the next 17 years.

In 1949, Brother Gabriel and Sister Carmella Mazzeo, of New Brunswick, New Jersey, began making yearly visits to Florida. Sister Carmella was a daughter of Brother Frank Sirangelo. They eventually moved to West Palm Beach in 1958 after a brother in New Jersey had a dream in which he saw Brother Gabriel in an airplane, scattering seeds all over the State of Florida.

FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA MISSION

Other brothers and sisters from New Jersey began to move to Florida around the same time. Brother Patsy Rogolino retired from his natural labor in August 1958 and moved to Fort Pierce, along with his wife, Sister Rose, and daughter Ruth. They had many experiences showing them that God had a work to perform in Fort Pierce. The Lord spoke to Brother Patsy, telling him that there was solid rock where he was. These words were repeated three times. Within a few months, they met a large family and began holding meetings in their home.

Brother Frank Rogolino and his family moved from New Jersey to Fort Pierce in March 1959. Around the same time, Brother John Moore and his family moved to Fort Pierce from Lockport, New York. The Brothers and Sisters rejoiced in being together. They began holding meetings in Brother Frank's home and, on October 13, 1960 they were established as a mission. It wasn't long before their house became too small for the number of members and children who attended the meetings.

Sister Rose Rogolino had an experience in which the Lord showed her that a Church building would one day be located on the property in back of her home. That experience became a reality five years later when the Fort Pierce Church building was erected there in 1964.

THE LEVITTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA BRANCH

Written by Jerry Valenti

Rome, Italy 1900 (The Seeds are Planted)

Carmen Guerrieri moved from Rome, Italy to the United States (in Ohio), got married, and started raising a family. He purchased a Bible and began to search the scriptures. Every Sunday, he gathered his wife and five children in the living room where they would sit in a circle while Carmen read to them from the Bible and taught them the Word of God. In 1927, Carmen Guerrieri passed away and his widow, Felicia, and five children moved to a home in Youngstown, Ohio.

Youngstown, Ohio 1927

The Guerrieri family, a widow and her five children, moved to a house in Youngstown, Ohio, next door to Arcangelo D'Amore (Damore) and across the street from Anthony Capotz. These men and their families were members of the Youngstown Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ. The Guerrieris became friendly with these neighbors and began attending Church with them. They enjoyed the Church very much, as the Word of God was familiar to them from the years of their late father, Carmen's, living room Bible readings. Felicia eventually became a member of the Church.

On August 21, 1932, 15-year-old Josephine Guerrieri was baptized in the Church along with her best friend, Rose Damore (Arcangelo's daughter), who was 19. Brother William Gennaro baptized Sister Jo and Brother Tony Corrado confirmed her. Josephine had been taught that one couldn't enter the Kingdom of God without baptism, so she knew that it was something she had to do.

The following year, Josephine became acquainted with Samuel Dell, whom she would eventually marry. Although he was 16 years old and a member of another church, Sam had never seen the inside of a Bible (members of that church were not encouraged to read the scriptures). Upon becoming acquainted with The Church of Jesus Christ, a Bible was made available to him and he began reading it. As he read, Sam came to the conclusion that the beliefs of the church he belonged to did not agree with the scriptures. He began to attend Church with Josephine.

I met a wonderful group of people—the brothers and sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ. I was immediately drawn to them and they took me under their wing.

In 1935, Josephine suffered appendicitis and her appendix burst. Back then, medicine was much less advanced and her case was considered hopeless. As a result, the doctor didn't even take normal care when performing surgery upon her; he didn't even bother to use a draining tube. She was going to die anyway, so why go to the trouble? After the doctor had

done what he could for her, Josephine was basically left to die; but God had other plans for her. Brother Tony Corrado was summoned to the hospital. He anointed Josephine, and the Lord intervened. Within two weeks, she was home from the hospital, completely healed of the affliction.

Eventually, Josephine and Sam were engaged to be married. By that time, Sam had been attending Church for a few years and the caring brothers and sisters began to prod him about being baptized. However, Sam felt that he wasn't ready—that it would restrict him from being able to do what he wanted. He wanted to wait until he was perfectly sure.

Sam continued to read the Scriptures. One of his favorite passages was:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up deadly serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16:17,18)

Sam had never witnessed a miracle and he wanted God to show him that these words were true. God used Sam's own family to show him.

Josephine and Sam were married in December 1939 and the following year a son, Brent, was born to them. When Brent was only six weeks old, Sam was faced with the need for a miracle from the Lord.

Josephine noticed that Brent was lying very still and quiet—unnatural for a small child. We called a doctor and he came to the house (they still did that in those days!). When the doctor examined him, he gave us some very disturbing news. Our son had bronchial pneumonia and no hospital or doctor in this world could do anything for him—he would be dead within eight hours. After the doctor left, I suggested to my wife that we call for an elder of the Church to anoint Brent. I called Brother Tony Corrado and he came right over. We knelt in prayer and Brother Tony anointed him. After his prayer was completed, he said to us: “Don't worry about Brent. He's going to live long enough to give you gray hair.” His prophecy came true. Brent recovered and I sometimes wonder how many of my gray hairs can be attributed to him as he grew up.

This should have been enough to convince me of the truth of The Church of Jesus Christ, but I was stubborn and continued to resist being baptized. Thus, the Lord had to once again bring sickness upon my family, this time to my wife. She became so afflicted that her whole body ached and she couldn't even get out of bed. A doctor examined her and diagnosed acute rheumatic fever. Nothing could be prescribed for her; she lay in bed for 30 days.

Finally, I contacted Brother Tony and asked him to come over and anoint her. After prayer for her, he once again assured us that everything would be all right. The following morning, my wife rose from her bed and went about doing her daily work. A miracle once more had occurred.

The Lord had once again come to Sam's rescue and he felt that it would be the last time unless he made himself right with God. Thus, Sam was baptized the following Sunday, September 5, 1942, by Brother T. Dominic Bucci. He felt a great relief in being a member of the Church and, as time went by, he found that he hadn't given up anything at all—he became acquainted with many wonderful members of the Church and soon knew people from coast to coast who were true friends to each other and to God.

The Dell's had a second child, a daughter named Flora. One night not long after she was born, Brother Sam came home from the steel mill after working a double shift (16 hours). He should have been exhausted but, for some reason, he couldn't fall asleep. As he sat in bed reading the scriptures, a thunder and lightning storm raged outside. Lightning struck and Brother Sam noticed a spark jump from a light fixture near Flora's crib. He was still looking in that direction when lightning struck again, blowing the fixture from the wall and catching the curtain on fire. Brother Sam leaped from the bed, pulled down the curtain and extinguished the fire. Had he been asleep, as he should have been, Flora would have been killed and the rest of the family might have died as well. By keeping him awake, the Lord preserved Brother Sam and his family. After extinguishing the fire, Brother Sam fell right to sleep.

Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania—1952

Brother Sam Dell continues his testimony:

The year was 1952. We, Samuel and Josephine Dell, had no thought of starting a new work in The Church of Jesus Christ, but God in His mysterious ways brings about His own design. We had absolutely no desire to move from our home in Youngstown, Ohio. We were happy and satisfied in serving the Lord in the Youngstown Branch until one day in the fall of the year 1952, my wife had the following experience:

“While performing my daily chores, I stepped out to the back porch of my home. As I was contemplating the task that was before us in building a retaining wall and considering the cost and labor, I had the following experience (a daylight experience).

“As I was looking at my backyard, the scene before me changed. I no longer was viewing my backyard but saw a level and pleasant area with all trees and green grass with the sun brightly shining through the trees. A voice spoke loud and clear saying, ‘You won’t be here long.’

“I was shocked and stood amazed for a moment, not knowing what this meant. In fact, I felt I would soon pass from this life.

“This was my first impression. I kept this experience from my husband thinking how terrible he would feel in knowing my fears. A few months later, Brother Sam came home from work with a brochure of a new community in Eastern Pennsylvania called Fairless Hills and also of a new steel mill that was being erected on the Delaware River by his company, United States Steel. In showing me this brochure, he asked me what I thought of the idea of living in a brand new community while he would be employed in a new steel plant.

“Within myself, I was faced with a dilemma. He did not know of my experience or my fears, but I shocked my husband when I said, ‘Where you go, I’ll go.’ Knowing my attitude from earlier remarks that I never wanted to move again into another home (for we had moved so many times before), he was really puzzled. At this time, I didn’t know that he really was not serious in making this big move; however, again I say that God moves in a mysterious way. It was in December of 1952 when we found ourselves on our way to the East Coast.

“While traveling on U.S. Route #1, in the vicinity of Fairless Hills, there before me appeared the area I had seen in my daylight vision. The flat land, tall trees, and the bright sun shining through the trees were there before my eyes. Then I understood immediately that God had prepared me to accept His plan. God knows our deepest thoughts and offers His divine protection and wisdom.”

When my wife had related this experience to me, I began to think back on all that had happened. I knew then that this was not a whim. As I journeyed toward the Steel Plant, leaving my wife at a waiting place, I prayed to the Lord that, if He wanted me to live in this area, that I would be able to be transferred from the Youngstown Plant to the Fairless Hills Works (both were U.S. Steel).

When I went into the employment office, I told the clerk that I wanted to inquire about a transfer. She told me that I would have to fill out an application, but I insisted that I was not applying as a new employee. She then called the manager and I proceeded to tell him the same thing. He then informed me that the policy was that everyone had to fill out an application, but he also stated that, when the papers were filled out, to give them to him personally.

I did what he asked, but when I gave him the application, he did not read it, but put it in an envelope, sealed it, and gave it to me, telling me to bring it inside the plant and to give it to a Mr. Griffith. Once again, I did as he instructed. When Mr. Griffith opened the envelope, he gave me an angry look and asked me who sent me to him. I told him that the employment manager sent me. He then said to me, "Mr. Dell, this is not the way to get transferred. You must apply for the transfer where you are employed (Youngstown). You are doing this backwards."

I was very disappointed. As I turned to leave, I looked up to see a name over a doorway of Mr. Leventry. I then asked Mr. Griffith if Mr. Leventry was in. He asked, "Why? Do you know him?" To which I replied, "Yes." He then told me to ask the secretary. She told me that Mr. Leventry was out and would be back later. I then turned to leave, went into a hallway, and there I saw Mr. Leventry. I went to him and told him who I was and what I was doing at the Fairless Works. I knew this man was a former superintendent from the Youngstown Works.

While Mr. Leventry and I were talking, I could see Mr. Griffith sitting at his desk, looking in our direction. Suddenly, he got up from his desk and walked towards us. He asked me for my application again and I handed it to him. He then told me to go back to Youngstown, that I would hear from them shortly. I feel that the Lord caused him to change his mind.

We then returned to Youngstown. Weeks later, I received a notice telling me that I was to report for work at the Fairless Works at the end of February, 1953. We put our home up for sale and had no trouble selling it. In the month of April, I moved my family and belongings to Trenton, New Jersey, across the Delaware River from the Fairless Works.

It was not easy to move from the area where we had lived from birth, to leave brothers and sisters of the Church as well as family and friends, but when the Lord says for us to go, we must obey. All things work for the good to those who love and serve the Lord.

After several months, Brother Sam began to wonder for what purpose God had guided them to this place. He felt that he was there to preach the Gospel, but he could not be ordained into the ministry unless he rid himself of his smoking habit.

One night, Brother Sam asked himself the question, "Which is more important, serving God or smoking cigarettes?" The answer was obvious, but he didn't feel confident in himself that he could give them up, as he had tried many times before with no success. That night, before going to bed, Brother Sam knelt down in prayer and asked the Lord to take away this habit so that he might be able to do God's work.

For the next several days, he carried a pack of cigarettes and a lighter around with him but fought the urge to smoke and kept petitioning God for assistance. He knew the Lord was helping him because he didn't shake or get nervous as he had the other times he had tried to quit. He never smoked another cigarette. God had prepared Brother Sam to do His work.

Korea—1953

A soldier of the United States Army named Frank Cervone was lying in his barrack's bed one night when he suddenly was unable to breathe. He leaped from his bed and, after a minute or two, he managed to begin breathing again. He didn't attach much significance to this event but it reoccurred several times over the next few weeks. However, one night, a sergeant saw him jump out of bed to catch his breath and Frank was ordered to report for sick call the next morning. After being examined, he was put into an ambulance and taken to the base hospital where he was told that one of his lungs was almost completely filled with fluid because of some type of pneumonia.

Frank spent the next several months being moved from one hospital to another—first to one in Japan and then to one in Hawaii. To help pass

the long days, he began writing to several girls whose names and addresses he had obtained from his cousin. One of the girls was Mary Jane Benyola of The Church of Jesus Christ; and, upon receiving Frank's letter, she asked the members of the Hopelawn Branch to pray for this young man who was so ill.

One day, Frank's health started deteriorating rapidly and he felt sure he was going to die:

All I could think of to say was, "Lord, I'm sorry for the kind of life I've led and for whatever wrong I've done." After I said that, a bright light, the whitest of white, shone all around me and I felt someone kiss me on the neck. After this happened, I immediately felt life flowing back into me and I knew I was going to make it.

When Frank got home and was completely recovered from his illness, he contacted Mary Jane and they started dating. Mary Jane introduced Frank to the Church and he took an immediate liking to it and attended with her at the Hopelawn Branch. Mary Jane had been baptized a few years earlier (July 23, 1950) by Brother Rocco Ensana on the same day that 19 other young people were baptized in New Jersey.

Mary Jane and Frank were married on July 3, 1954 and took up residence in Trenton. They attended meetings at the Edison Branch and became friends with Sam and Josephine Dell.

Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania—1954

The Dells moved into a new home in Fairless Hills and began telling others about The Church of Jesus Christ. In the spring of 1954, a group of people were invited to the Dells' home and Brother Rocco Ensana of the Edison Branch came to preach the Gospel to them. This was the first meeting of The Church of Jesus Christ in Fairless Hills.

In 1955, Brother Sam was ordained into the ministry and began holding meetings in various homes. The Cervones attended regularly while others came from time to time. The Fairless Hills work was thus begun with three members: Brother Sam, Sister Josephine and Sister Mary Jane.

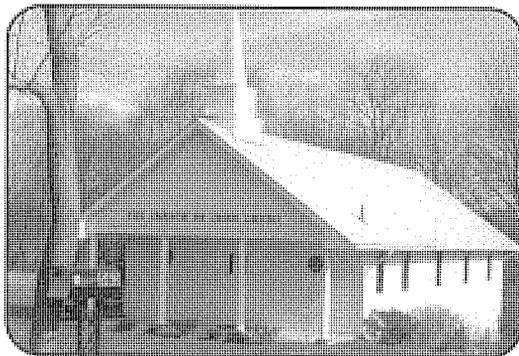
The following year, the count reached four as Brent Dell (now 16 years old) was baptized in the Edison Branch by Brother Rocco Ensana.

The first baptisms performed at Fairless Hills occurred on March 17, 1957 as a husband and wife, George and Margaret Lynn, were baptized by Brother Sam. While standing at the water's edge, Frank Cervone expressed an overwhelming desire to be baptized also, so there were three converts that day. Brother Sam fondly recalls the effort put forth in baptizing Brother Frank, who is a very large man. As it is written of King Saul in the Bible: "... from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." (I Samuel 9:2)

Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania—1961

A few years later, Brother Sam's brother and sister-in-law were baptized into the Church. Frank Dellagnena was baptized by Brother George Funkhouser in June 1961 and Theresa Dellagnena was baptized by Brother Anthony Ensana on August 28, 1961. Frank and Theresa had been close to Sam and Josephine for years, from back when they all lived in Youngstown, spending a lot of time at their home and getting to know the Church people who came to visit.

After meeting in various homes for about five years, the group began renting a room in the Hugh Carcella Union Hall at a cost of \$10 per week. The first meeting at the Union Hall was held on November 12, 1961.

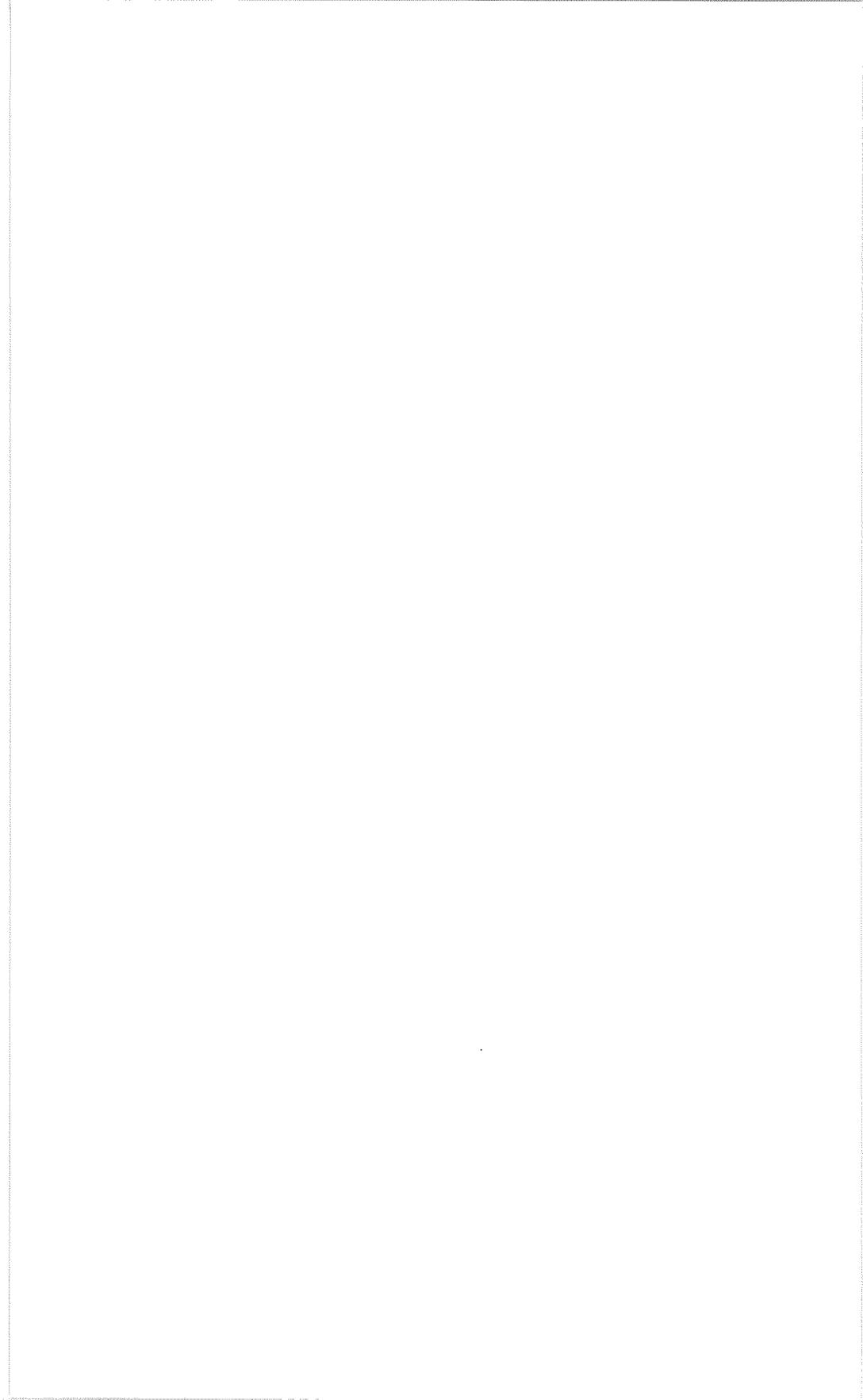


Levittown Church Building on Levittown Pkwy

A few months later, Brother Charles Smith, another employee of United States Steel, was transferred from Glassport to the Fairless Hills Works. He and his wife, Sister Ilene, relocated and became part of the Fairless Hills Mission.

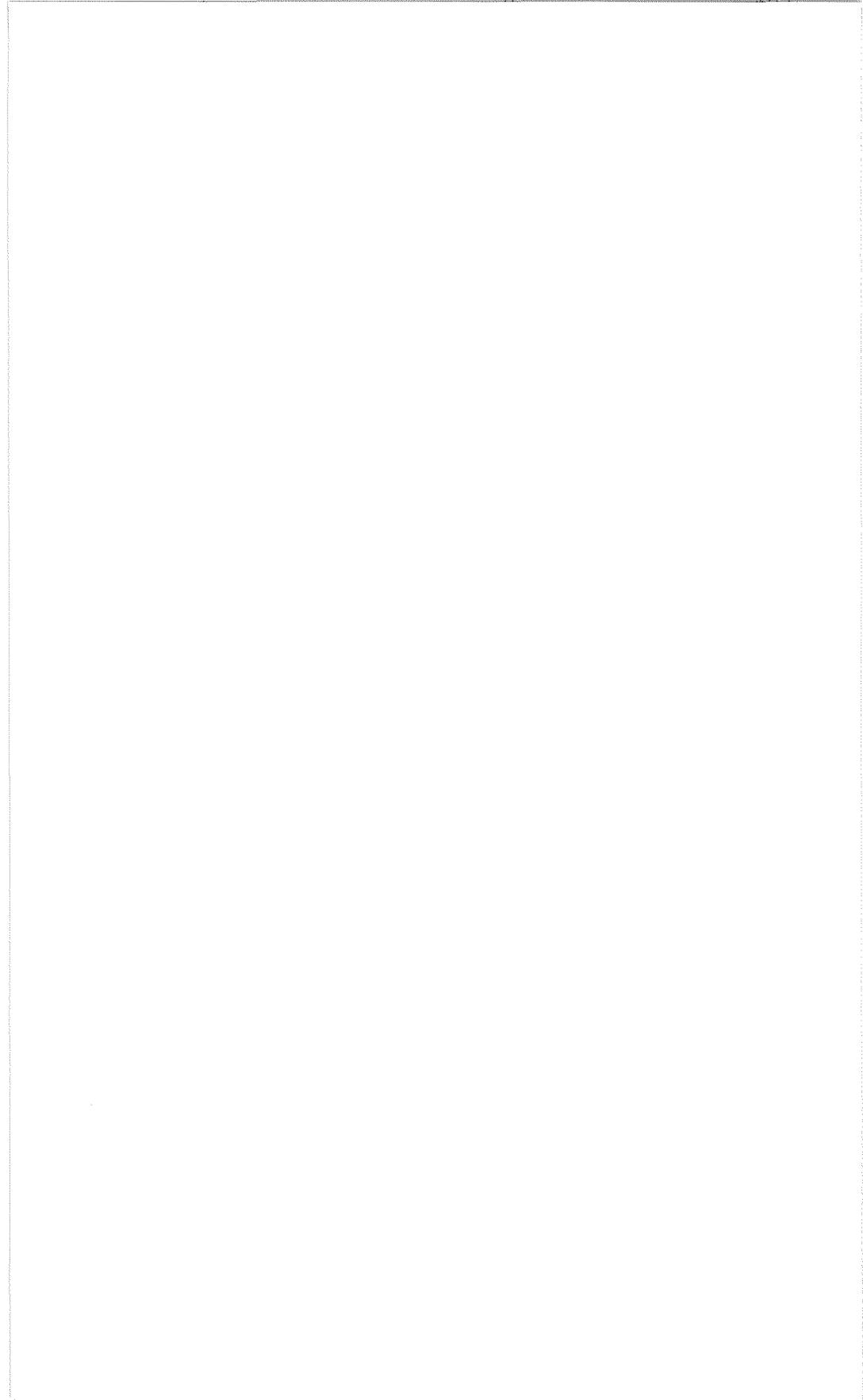
In 1962, the group of II members (Sam, Josephine, and Brent Dell; Charles and Ilene Smith; Frank and Mary Jane Cervone; George and Margaret Lynn; and Frank and Theresa Dellagnena) received permission from the Edison Branch to organize Fairless Hills into an official Mission of The Church. The organization meeting was held at the home of Brother Frank Dell on April 18, 1962. The officers elected were as follows:

Presiding Elder	Sam Dell
Presiding Teacher	Charles Smith
Presiding Deaconess	Josephine Dell
Recording Secretary	Ilene Smith
Financial Secretary/Treasurer	Josephine Dell



6

History
of the
California
District



CHAPTER SIX

Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be. 1 Nephi 13:37

The Pacific Coast District, as of 1960, comprised the State of California, Mexico, and Arizona. When first organized, it was called "The California District." Many years later, the name was changed to "The Pacific Coast District," and more recently, it was changed again to the Pacific Region." (Since this history has been written up to 1960, it shall be referred to as The California District.) In the 1950s, meetings were held in Bell, San Fernando Valley, Modesto, San Diego, San Jose, and Tijuana, Mexico. Also, houses of worship were erected and dedicated in Bell, San Diego, San Fernando Valley and Modesto.

Some members of the Church migrated to California for health reasons, others because of the more pleasant weather, and some by Divine direction. Excerpts of experiences received by different members will be inscribed periodically in this history.

ORIGINS OF THE LOS ANGELES MISSION

The first recorded presence of the Church in California was in 1930. At the July 1931 Conference held at Monongahela, Pennsylvania, Evangelist Rocco Biscotti reported baptizing two converts in 1930 in Venice, California, a suburb of Los Angeles to the west on the Pacific Ocean shore. No further record is found of these two people.

With the beginning of the decade of the 1940s, many of the saints in the east began to experience a desire to move to California. Between 1940 and 1943, several brothers and sisters from various locations moved to Los Angeles.

An Experience of Brother John Gammichia

Brother John Gammichia of Detroit, Michigan was afflicted with hay fever, and because of the suffering he endured, one day he implored the Lord to show him where he could find some relief. In 1942, he had the following dreams:

One night I dreamed that Sister Mary Scarsella asked me to go with her. We traveled together until we reached California. When we arrived there, she showed me a piece of land that needed to be worked. There was a shovel lying there and a bouquet of flowers. She told me to plant the flowers, as there was much work to be done.

The second evening, I asked the Lord to clarify the dream, so I could understand it. I dreamed that a multitude of people and I were coming out of different factories. We walked toward the seashore. One man behind me spoke three times saying, "What does the word evangelist mean?" After the third time, I turned around and answered, "For this cause I am here in the State of California: to evangelize the Word of God." Brother John Romano would also appear to me and say, "There is a lot of work for you to perform, be faithful."

Two weeks following these dreams, Brother Gammichia met Brother William (Bill) Buffa, who, after hearing that he was going to California, gave him his sister-in-law's address. On July 3, 1943, he left Detroit and, upon arriving in California, got in touch with Brother Buffa's sister-in-law, Mary Spata, who received him warmly. Eleven months later, Brother Gammichia became acquainted with Sister Angeline and Brother Mike Abruzzessi. In front of the Abruzzessi's home was an empty store that this small group began to prepare for worship purposes.

During the refurbishing of the building, Sister Victoria Caputo and some of her friends arrived from Detroit and settled in Santa Monica,

California. Brother Gammichia notified her of the forthcoming meeting at the remodeled store.

Sister Victoria went to the meeting and, in her testimony, said that she was told in a dream that the meeting in Los Angeles would start with five members. This elated the brothers and sisters because that was exactly the number present—five members! There were Brother Charles D'Amico of Detroit, Michigan; Brother and Sister Abruzzessi of New Brunswick, New Jersey; Sister Victoria Caputo of Detroit, Michigan; and Brother John Gammicchia from Detroit, Michigan. What a marvelous blessing God poured upon this small group of saints!

Soon afterwards, Brother Rocco Meo of Detroit, Michigan, an evangelist, and his son, Billy, arrived in Los Angeles. Together, Brothers Rocco and John continued to preach the Restored Gospel.

Brother Gammichia related an experience received by Brother Sam Monterosso, who saw in a vision, while en route to California, a white flag on the mountain of Hollywood, and, written in gold letters were the words "The Church of Jesus Christ."

Brother Gammichia labored for the Church in California until Brother James Heaps and his family arrived, and then, on April 13, 1950, returned to Detroit, Michigan. Thus ended his work in California.

An Experience of Brother Rocco Meo

In 1944, Brother Rocco Meo, an evangelist of The Church of Jesus Christ, left Detroit, Michigan with California as his destination. Following are excerpts of his experience that prompted him to make this move.



Rocco Meo (center) with Peter Capone (left) and Joseph Capone (right)

My heart was yearning to go to California, feeling sure that it was the place where God wanted me to be. In 1943, I became very restless . . . I felt to fast, and did so for many days . . . continuing until one night I had a dream. I found myself in a place I had never seen before. . . . I did not cease to pray as I desired more evidence from God. You see, I did not fully trust my great yearning to take such an important step. Matterless how certain man may feel, there is the Will of God to be considered above all, for I know that which God ordains is blessed.

One evening, I received a call from Sister Marietta Ruzzi asking me to go to her home as she had something very important to tell me. [After arriving there] . . . she inquired what I was doing on a particular day. I told her I had been fasting that day for I desired a great favor from the Lord. She said, "While I was resting on my sofa, a messenger of God appeared to me who said, 'Tell Rocco Meo that his prayers have been answered, and that he may go forth, for the Lord is with him.'" Sister Ruzzi continued, saying, "After the messenger of God left, I saw Sister Meo packing your suitcase, and I saw you leaving for California, your wife remaining behind to follow you later."

Sister Ruzzi then said, "Go forth, for this message is true, surely the Lord will prosper you in the land where you go." My joy was great and my soul was full of the love of God. . . . Now that I knew God was in the matter, and having confirmed the revelation that was in my soul, we made preparations. I quit my job, and soon afterwards, along with my son, William, departed for California in April 1944.

As we reached the State of Texas, we encountered a great hailstorm. Becoming dangerous to drive, we parked and, turning to Billy, I said, "Let us pray." After ceasing our prayer, we raised our heads and, to my great astonishment, I saw a remarkable spectacle. In front of our car appeared an archway, white in color. Turning to Billy, I asked, "What do you see?" "An archway," he replied. My joy was overwhelming, for I knew my son would always remember the goodness of the Lord in our hour of need.

I began to drive through the fog, following the archway, for it continued to stay in front of us. In a few minutes the storm ceased, the clouds fled away, and the sun quickly illuminated the sky. At this point, the archway disappeared. We praised the Lord for this wonderful miracle. Continuing on our journey, we arrived in Los Angeles on April 21, 1944. We searched for a place to live, and finally found one in poor condition, as rentals were difficult to find during World War II. As

soon as we were settled, I wrote to my wife telling her to sell everything and come to join us. In September 1944, my wife, my son, Rudolph [Rudy], and my daughter, Rachel [Fallavoletta], arrived in California. It was a blessed reunion, for we felt that God had approved our coming to California. We bought a large house, with the intention of holding meetings and starting the wheel of the Gospel of Jesus Christ rolling in this part of the country.

Our first meeting was attended by thirteen members: John Gammichia, Charles D'Amico, Ben and Helen Stroud, Sam Monterosso, Stanley and Anna Labanauskas, Mike and Angelina Abruzzessi, Sisters Buscaino and Caputo, and my wife, Concetta and [me].

The knowledge that God was pleased with our endeavors filled us with joy and happiness. We held meetings in our home for two and a half years. By 1946, our house was filled to capacity with members who had migrated to California from several states. [Because of] the increase in membership, the Los Angeles Mission became a Branch with its location in Bell, California.

Experiences of Brother V. James and Sister Mary Lovalvo

Sister Mary writes:

My husband . . . was suffering from hay fever and asthma. It had become so severe that, during [that] season [of the year], he would spend most of the nights sitting in a straight chair or—I can still see him—leaning on the chest of drawers in an attempt to breathe more easily. He had been anointed several times without any relief. The reader can understand why he went to a specialist for help, and help he did find. He was given seasonal injections that enabled him to live comfortably.

In 1946, he developed chest pains. After extensive tests, he was advised by the doctor to stop the shots and move to a place where there was no growth of ragweed. Apparently, the medicine in the shots was very damaging. I can see him filled with frustration, exclaiming, "The Church is my life! How can we go so far away from the General Church?"

Now, decisions and prayers began; one, whether or not to leave Detroit, Michigan. Second, prayers that our God would intervene. We made the choice to stop the injections and prayed that our Heavenly Father would see us through this trial. . . .

We finally decided to go to California. Prior to leaving, we attended the General Church Conference held in Detroit in April, 1947.

On Sunday morning, the late President Brother William H. Cadman asked my husband to preach. In his closing remarks, he told the brothers and sisters that he stopped the allergy shots and that we were now waiting to make an important decision. He finished with the words, "I do not want to go and leave you." At this point, someone arose and spoke in the gift of tongues. A sister, who spoke only in the English language, sitting toward the front of the auditorium, had the interpretation of the tongues that was, "Thus saith the Lord, you go, and I will carry you in the palm of My hand." Brother Alex Gentile's mother, who had recently arrived from Italy, was sitting in the rear of the auditorium. She arose immediately, after the English-speaking sister sat down, and gave the same interpretation in the Italian language. . . . We left the meeting with the words of the Lord still ringing in our ears, "Go, and I will carry you in the palm of My hand."

Now there was a final decision to make: Go to California where, as the doctor had said, the ragweed was nonexistent, or stay in Detroit, inasmuch as my husband had not suffered any hay-fever attacks for a year and a half . . . [because of] the many prayers that had been offered to God in his behalf.

Since we were already packed for traveling, my husband said, "Let's go to California. We will visit with the few brothers and sisters [who] are there and then come back home. . . ."

I asked our children, Leonard James and Priscilla Marie (Penny), what they thought about going to California. In unison, they replied, "We will go anywhere, as long as both of you are there." With that, we got into our car and started our journey westward. Having our hymn books with us, we sang all along the way. . . .

On one occasion during the trip, we arrived at a mountain. As we reached its top, we were astonished at its splendor, beauty beyond anything or any place we had ever been or seen. The sky seemed so close that we felt that, if God would open our eyes, we would behold His glory.

As we looked in amazement, my husband began to sneeze uncontrollably. . . . During a lull in his sneezing attack[s], he turned to us and said, "I hate to do 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 us. We were so close! We became very quiet in our terrible disappointment.

While offering a prayer to the Almighty, His Word, through the gift of tongues and interpretation, came to me saying, "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. . . . Suddenly, I blinked my eyes and saw the heavens open, and 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 will trust in God.” As he spoke these words, the sneezing stopped, much to our delight.

We finally arrived in California. Sister Mary Dichiera and family received and welcomed us in their home with open arms and hearts. So did all the brothers and sisters we visited. In the course of conversation, we told them that this was only a visit and that we might go back to Detroit. When they heard this, they held a meeting at one of the sister’s homes, and each one expressed their joy at having us there and that they had prayed to the Lord to put in our hearts the desire to stay with them in California.

Seeing their great love, and observing the need for helpers in California, we told them that we would try it out, especially since my husband had taken a leave of absence from his job. We certainly gave it a “try.” In process of time, California grew and grew.

Sister Mary continues:

The successes we enjoyed could not have been accomplished without God and without our children, Leonard James and Penny. They were a constant source of strength, joy and courage. My husband and I have sold our property and businesses several times, packed, and gone to different parts of His Vineyard—by the direction of the Holy Spirit—where we have helped in their spiritual welfare and growth. We have never had any regrets. Although we have gone through some very “tough” times, God has constantly blessed us immensely.

My husband often says, “God healed me of my allergies, and no matter what lies before me, I can testify that I heard the voice of God say, “You go, and I will carry you in the palm of my hand.” I will conclude, saying to my husband, “Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people are my people, your God is my God.”

THE BELL BRANCH

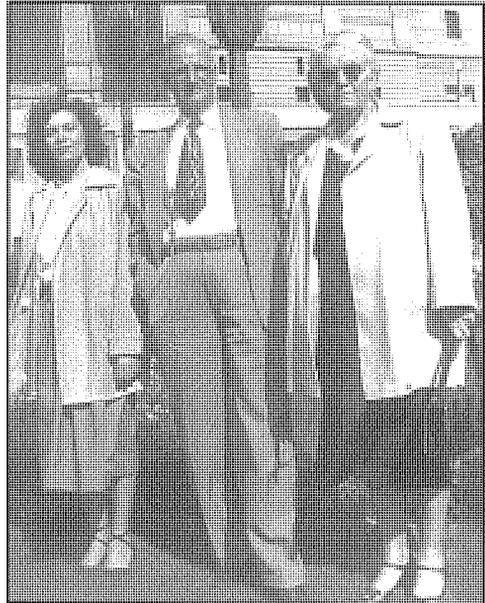
Through the help of God and the untiring efforts of Brothers Rocco Meo and John Gammichia, the Los Angeles Mission prospered spiritually and numerically. The first officers of the Mission were:

Presiding Elder	Rocco Meo
Counselor	John Gammicchia
Teacher	Ben Stroud
Deacon	Stanley Labanauskas

Within a year, Sisters Annette Labanauskas and Helen Stroud were ordained deaconesses, and in 1945, a Sunday School was organized with Brother Ben Stroud elected as the first superintendent.

During the years 1945 and 1946, many saints from Detroit, Michigan moved to the Los Angeles area. They were: Sam and Pamela Monterosso, Joseph and Providence Monterosso, Nicolina Caputo, Peter and Josephine Maniaci, Antonina Buscaino, Fiore Vivola, Anthony and Mary Lamberto, Mariano Rossi, Vincent and Carmela Mercuri, and Frank and Santina Mercuri.

Brother James Heaps, an evangelist, and his family had moved from Pennsylvania to Detroit, Michigan in 1942. Since 1933, Brother Heaps had desired to go to California, and it was fulfilled in 1946 when he departed from Detroit in his new Nash Rambler and started westward. Upon his arrival in the Los Angeles area, he began working together with Brothers Meo and Gammichia in preaching the Restored Gos-



Sarah Watson, James and Margaret Heaps

pel. Soon afterwards Brother Heaps' family joined him. Other saints arriving were Cosmo and Mary Dichiera from McKeesport, Pennsylvania with their family, and Elder Louis Biscotti, his wife, Louise, Sister Loretta Biscotti, and Edith Curtis, all from Cleveland, Ohio.

At that time, Brother V. James Loalvo, with his wife and children, arrived and made their residence on the West Coast, also. Brother Heaps remarked in his autobiography, "Upon his arrival, Brother Loalvo became a help in the MBA and worked with the young people."

The MBA was held on Friday evenings in various members' homes. It had been organized in the early part of 1947 by Brother Nick Liberto of San Diego.

On April 7, 1946, Mary Spata became the first convert to be baptized. Sister Mary and her husband, George, had lived in the Los Angeles area for more than 20 years. On October 6, 1946, Harriet Stroud (Meo) was baptized, and on December 1, Evelyn Kennedy (Perdue), born and raised in the Jewish traditions, went into the waters of baptism. It was Sister Evelyn, who in 1941 in Cleveland, Ohio, gave her testimony to the Stroud family.

Sister Mary Spata aptly stated her feelings in a letter to *The Gospel News*, January 1950, "Truly, we live in a beautiful part of the earth; but to me it is the beauty which entered my soul since I made a covenant with God through my Savior, Jesus Christ." A third sister of this family was also baptized on May 16, 1948 at the Bell Branch, the youngest of the three, Sadie Nicosia.

Early in 1947, Brother Charlie D'Amico, while at work, gave his testimony to a young man 33 years of age, who came to the Church and met the Lord. Edward Perdue was baptized soon thereafter and later became an evangelist for the Church in Mexico.

The saints were enjoying the blessings of the Lord and each other's fellowship. Soon, the idea of enjoying a day of relaxation was born in the mind of young Sister Margaret Heaps who immediately suggested a picnic. Consequently, the first of what was to become an annual Sunday School picnic was held on September 1, 1947, at the South Gate Park.

Some of the members from San Diego also attended this event, and it was a huge success.

Bell Becomes a Branch

At first, the Los Angeles Mission was under Branch #3, Detroit. In 1946, it became an established Mission and on, January 31, 1948, it was organized as a Branch, with Brother Alma Cadman, visiting apostle from Pennsylvania, presided over the meeting. From then on, the Mission became known as the Bell Branch. The following are the officers who were elected:

Presiding Elder	James Heaps
First Counselor	Louis Biscotti
Second Counselor	John Gammichia
Secretary	Concetta Meo
Presiding Teacher	John Gammichia
Assistant Teacher	Joseph Capone
Presiding Deacon	Stanley Labanaskus
Presiding Deaconess	Annette Labanaskus
Assistant Deaconess	Rose Scalise
Financial Secretary	Mary Loyalvo
Treasurer	Santina Mercuri
Trustees	Louis Biscotti, James Heaps, Rocco Meo, V. James Loyalvo, and John Gammichia

For a while, meetings were held in the homes of various members, but, when their number increased, the South Gate Women's Club on California Avenue was rented. On Wednesdays and Fridays, meetings were held in different homes of the members.

Bell Branch Finds a Home

In the fall of 1947, Brother Heaps found a small church building for sale. It measured only 18 by 40 feet but was in good condition. However, it had no foyer, and the restrooms were not accessible from the inside of the small auditorium. The building stood on a corner lot, 100

by 100 feet, at 4706 Filmore Avenue. The price of this small church was \$6,000.

Following the service, on a Sunday afternoon, the entire congregation drove to Bell to see their prospective new house of worship. They fell in love with it. They were positive that the Lord had brought Brother Heaps to this locale. Satan, however, didn't like the happiness which was in the hearts of the saints—the prospect of a building in which they could worship Almighty God—and he created a few hours of apprehension.

A group of young people had driven over in Rudy Meo's car, an old 1933 Essex-terraplane convertible with a rumble seat. On the way back to South Gate, the car developed a problem and the engine stopped running, making them late in returning. At this particular time, Rudy was a single man, and in his brief account writes, "Several mothers were concerned for their daughters' safety." They did arrive safely, however.

While the property was in escrow, the sellers wanted to cancel the sale because they felt that the property was worth more than \$6,000. Immediately, the members fasted and prayed, with beneficial results—the church building was theirs!

On Sunday, November 2, 1947, the members met in the newly acquired building for the first time, with 51 in attendance for Sunday School. Brother James Heaps used the theme, "Is God With Us or Not," as the opening speaker, and Brother V. James Loyalvo sang the hymn, "O Soul, Have You Thought." Violet Dichiera asked to be baptized, and on the following Sunday morning, she was immersed in the waters of regeneration. Sister Margaret Heaps wrote in *The Gospel News* (December 1947), "Our Church was filled with the Glory of God. There were a number of visitors present. We are sure this is our place and God has favored us."

Soon the building became too small. Sixty to seventy persons attended every Sunday, filling the church to capacity. Late in 1951, it was decided to add a wing to the building. The addition was about the same size as the original structure. The church was now L-shaped, with the restrooms accessible from the inside of the building.



Meeting at Bell Branch, 1953, when they were meeting in the present Sunday School wing: pictured: standing: George Spata, Bill Meo, Unknown, Unknown, James Heaps holding grandson, Larry Henderson, Unknown, Harry Marshall, Alma Cadman, V. James Lovalvo, Mary Lovalvo, Margaret Henderson, Sadie Nicosia, Mary Spata, Priscilla Carneval, Rose Scalise, Sarah Watson, Joe Nicosia, Mike Abruzzese; sitting: Unknown, Unknown, Tom and Mary Scalise

Before long, it became obvious that even with the additional wing, more space was needed. The Sunday services were attended by more members and visitors than could be comfortably accommodated.

At a business meeting held on September 15, 1953, the following unusual motion was passed unanimously: "That all working members pledge \$100 towards the erection of a new church building which is to be paid in three months."

Although the Branch had no mortgage on the building and no debts, it is truly remarkable that with such a small capital, \$1,327, two months after the above meeting, ground was broken and the construction began. Initially, the Picciutos, Ernest and Dan (father and son), were in charge of the project; but, after they had to return to Ohio, George Heaps replaced them.

Because the majority of the brothers had full-time jobs, it was necessary for most of the work to be done in the evenings and on Saturdays. (There were few retirees at that time.) Evening work sometimes went

beyond 11 P.M. The members worked on Saturday mornings while fasting and praying. The sisters always provided delicious lunches for the workers, and at various stages of construction, many of the ladies, young and older, joined the men in wielding shovels, hammers, and paintbrushes.

When the building was ready for plastering, Brother Emil Carlini came from Detroit to do the work. He was assisted by Brother Joseph Straccia (also from Detroit) and John Dulisse.

Miracle Occurs During Construction

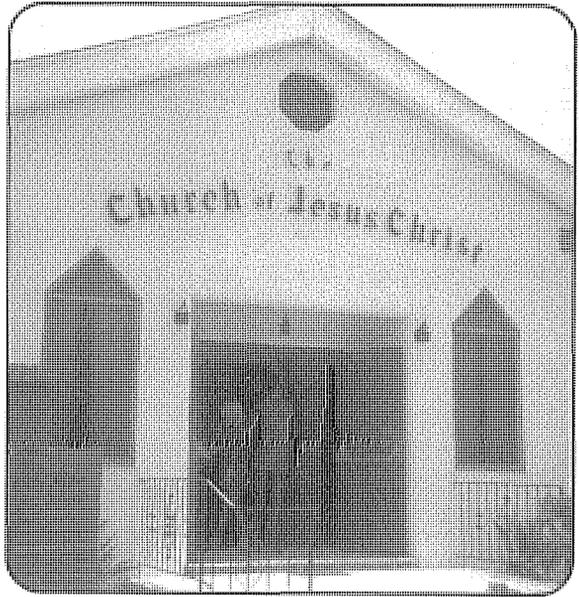
Satan, of course, could not permit the construction to proceed without interference. One Saturday morning, the gas had to be shut off while the lines were being reconstructed, and afterwards, it was turned on again. Unfortunately, the sisters were not informed of this. They had prepared some chicken for the workers and put it in the oven to cook. In a short while, Sister Mary Lovalvo noticed that the food wasn't cooking, so she lit a match, and opened the oven door to relight the pilot. Suddenly, the accumulated gas exploded in her face, igniting her eyebrows, eyelashes, some of her hair, and part of her clothes. As she screamed in pain, Sister Annette Labanauskus, who was standing nearby, ran to her attempting to put out the flames by putting her arms around her.

Hearing the screams, many of the men working on the building came rushing into the kitchen. By this time, the flames had been extinguished, but Sister Mary's face was very red because of severe burns. When Brother James Heaps saw this heart-rending scene, he poured a whole bottle of blessed oil upon her head, which kept running down her clothes. Everyone knelt while the ministry, with broken hearts, cried mightily to the Lord, asking for Divine providence upon Sister Mary.

Because of the explosion, Sister Mary was blinded until the next day. She refused to be taken to the hospital; she was going to put her trust in the Almighty. When she walked into the Church on Sunday morning, the saints beheld a miracle. The only visible signs of her traumatic experience were singed eyebrows and some burned hair on her head. There wasn't the slightest sign of a burn on her face. That day praises to God

from the hearts of the saints rang out joyfully for the wonderful way that He had spared Sister Mary of permanent injuries and disfigurement.

It took seven months to complete the construction of the building. The total cost of the building was an amazingly low amount: \$14,807 and the church could seat more than 250 persons.



Bell Church Building on Filmore Avenue

At the dedication service, on June 27, 1954, the church was filled to capacity, with over 300 people in attendance; but more importantly, the auditorium was filled with God's Holy Spirit all day long. Preaching, singing, and testimonies attested to the wonderful love of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bell Branch served as the District Headquarters since the District was organized in the early 1950s. Many services have been held there with capacity attendance. For many years, Bell Branch was a focal point of the Church in the West. This facility has served the Church well.

THE SAN DIEGO BRANCH

In 1960, the late Sister Lena Liberto, a humble, faithful servant of the Lord, wrote a short but interesting account regarding the beginnings and early growth of the San Diego Branch. Her whole personality was

one of love and joy in the Lord, and one could not visit her without feeling her dedication and service to God. She had a smile and a word of encouragement for everyone. As an ordained deaconess, she magnified the office by her faithfulness. The prologue and the epilogue of her Branch history reveal the humility of this genuinely unassuming sister. She writes,

It gives me great joy to have the privilege of writing the history of the San Diego, California Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ. May God ever help us to hold on to the "rod of iron" until He calls us home to Him is my prayer.

In the month of March 1944, Brothers Charles Breci, who was always referred to as Brother Charley, and Dominic Benenati left Detroit, Michigan for a visit to California. Upon arriving in San Diego, they visited Brother Tom Amormino and his family who had already established themselves in the city. It was indeed a joyful encounter with this family, but more so, to find an open door in a strange location. They also marveled at the wonderful climate they found. What a difference between the east and the west Coast in March!

After a short visit, they returned home, telling all of their visit. It was a land of fruit trees and mild weather—a place to establish the Church. These brothers prayed with their families whether it was the will of God that they move to California. After many prayers, the Lord gave Sister Josephine Breci, who had been skeptical, an experience. In a dream, she was given a packet of flower seeds and was told, "Go to California and plant them." Relying on this revelation, she and her husband moved to San Diego, and that year, 1944, the migration to San Diego began.

The First Meeting in San Diego

The first meeting held in San Diego was in the home of Brother Patsy and Sister Louise DiBattista, who had previously moved from Detroit, Michigan, accompanied by their daughter, Sister Jeannette. Those present were: Brother Patsy DiBattista and family, Louise Ciccati, Sister

Catherine Poma and family, Peter Guarano (baptized seven years later), and Brother Tom Amormino and family. Altogether, there were nineteen people present. The meeting was opened with the hymn, "I'm a Pilgrim," apropos for the moment, as they felt like pilgrims in a strange land. That first meeting was never forgotten, for God truly blessed them abundantly.

Several meetings were held in the DiBattista home, and then Brother and Sister Breci opened their house for a meeting place until a church edifice was built. The small group grew to thirteen members and was under the jurisdiction of Branch #4 in Detroit, Michigan until April 1947, at which time they were organized as an established mission with the following officers:

Presiding Elder	Patsy DiBattista
Teacher	Dominic Benenati
Deacon	Frank Vultaggio
Presiding Deaconess	Josephine Breci



First Baptism in San Diego Branch, 1945: left to right: Jeanette DiBattista, Unknown, Frank Vultaggio, Catherine Poma, Margaret Vultaggio, Frankie Vultaggio, Unknown, Angela Poma, Sister Benenati, Louise DiBattista, Louise Ciccati (candidate), Patsy DiBattista, and Charlie Breci

The First Baptism

The small group enjoyed the blessings of the Lord, among which was a dream received by the late Brother Mariano Rossi, in which he saw the Standard of Christ raised in San Diego. Shortly afterwards, on October 21, 1945, Louise Ciccati was baptized. In the years following, many others obeyed the Gospel. Through the efforts of Brother Nick Liberto, the Church was incorporated in California on December 1, 1947.

San Diego Becomes A Branch

In 1948, San Diego was organized as a branch by visiting Apostle Alma Cadman, with the following officers:

Presiding Elder	Charles Breci
First Counselor	Patsy DiBattista
Second Counselor	Dominic Castelli
Teachers	Nick Liberto and William DeFranco
Deacons	Frank Vultaggio, Anthony Lombardo, Demetrio Turano
Deaconesses	Josephine Breci, Louise DiBattista, Jenny Castelli, and Bernadine Thomas
Recording Secretary	Catherine Poma
Financial Secretary	Chris Thomas
Treasurer	Frank Vultaggio
Trustees	Charles Breci, Nick Liberto, Nick Lombardo, and Chris Thomas

A Remarkable Healing

In 1947, in a Sunday meeting, the saints in San Diego witnessed a miracle of healing. Brother Joseph and Sister Ann Smith and family, who were visiting with the Libertos, were in attendance at this meeting. At that time, Brother Smith was suffering from an incurable disease called silicosis. He had been told that he had only six months to live. While praying for God's blessings on the Lord's Supper, Brother Charles Breci—who was unaware of brother Smith's affliction—was motivated to ask the Lord to "heal anyone who may be sorely afflicted in our midst." After prayer, Sister Violet Thomas turned to Brother Smith's wife, Ann,

and said, "I feel that God has heard that prayer and a miracle will be performed."

The next day, when Brother Smith went to the doctor, the X-Rays revealed no disease present, and his lungs were clear and operating normally. What a wonderful blessing! It was certainly something for which to praise the Lord!

A House of Worship

A desire to erect a "House of Worship" was born in the hearts of the San Diego members, and so a building fund was created for that purpose. Eventually, on March 25, 1948, after many prayers, a lot was bought for \$1600 at 3830 39th Street. The hope of having a building was rekindled in the hearts of everyone. Donations began to come in from many sources. The foundation was laid, the building was roughed in, and it was time for the finishing touches. Brothers Emil Carlini and Joseph Straccia from Detroit, Michigan plastered the entire building, and in a few weeks the church was ready for dedication.

The hoped-for day came, and the church was dedicated. Brother V. James Lovalvo was the introductory speaker, using the dedication of the Temple of Solomon as his topic. Other brothers spoke also, and many hymns were sung to the glory of God. In general, it was a day of rejoicing, thanksgiving and praising the Lord.

The San Diego Branch grew in numbers and can record many wonderful blessings bestowed upon it from heaven. Although—through the passage of years—many of those who were the "charter members" have gone to their reward in Paradise, the saints in San Diego continue to serve the Lord, witnessing both to the Gentiles and the Seed of Joseph.

The Ladies' Uplift Circle

On August 27, 1946, the Ladies' Uplift Circle was organized in San Diego by Sister Jenny Castelli, at that time still a visitor from Detroit, Michigan. The charter members were: Sisters Josephine Breci, Mary Saczko, Lena Liberto, Violet Thomas and Carmella Lombardo.

“Throughout the meeting, a good feeling was present,” wrote Sister Violet Thomas.

As time went on, the Circle grew, and many blessings were experienced. The members devoted, and still do today, a portion of their services in prayer for the ministry, the sick, and the success of missionary endeavors of the General Church.

The Missionary Benevolent Association (MBA)

During the Christmas holiday season of 1946, an MBA was organized in the San Diego Branch by Brother Nick Liberto, who became its first president. The San Diego MBA has flourished from its beginning, and as of this date is still an active auxiliary of the Branch.

THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BRANCH

In the 1940s and 50s, California’s San Fernando Valley was not overly populated. Many people thought that the climate was too hot in the summer for comfortable living. Nevertheless, progress was inevitable. People began to migrate to California, gradually filling the Los Angeles basin. In process of time, people migrated to “the Valley” (as it became commonly called). Included in this move were some of the brothers and sisters.

In the latter part of 1949, Brother V. James Lovalvo and his family began to visit some of the folks in the Valley area. He asked Brother Rocco Meo to accompany him. They started to hold meetings with some of the people that were visited. The potential for a mission in that area was readily apparent.

According to the testimony of Brother Rocco Meo (quoted previously with respect to the Bell Branch), he states:

During this period of growth [referring to the Bell Branch], Brother Jim Lovalvo and I held a few meetings in San Fernando Valley, but found no response. However, I did not cease to pray, for my desire was (and still is) to bring souls unto . . . Christ, for the Lord surely gave me

the spirit of an evangelist. Even now, as I am writing, my heart is yearning to tell the world that Jesus died that mankind may live, for He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." . . . (Matthew II:28)

Brother Meo still had a desire to work in the San Fernando Valley. Strengthened by an experience he received, he continued to pursue his labors there. He records:

One night, I found myself in our backyard. There stood a woman before me, [pointing] towards the San Fernando Valley . . . and said, "That's where your work is."

He also wrote that the Lord showed him where he was to hold meetings. After Brother Loalvo returned to Detroit, in the latter part of 1951, (he later returned to California in 1953, residing in the San Fernando Valley), Brother Rocco Meo continued to hold meetings in the Valley (in Sister Mary Dichiera's home). By this time, other members had also made the Valley their home. Those living in the Valley, at that time, included the Azzinaro family, the Jones family, the Cavallaro family, the Parravano family, the Dichiera family, the Ridosh family, and the Zima family. The first recorded baptism in the Valley was that of Brother Nunciato Zima on August 27, 1950, followed shortly thereafter by Brother Alex Cavallaro, who was baptized by brother Rocco Meo, on November 23, 1950.

The Chicken Coop

The members now needed a place to hold meetings. Accordingly, Brother Cavallaro, with the help of others, converted part of a chicken coop located on his property into a sanctuary. At this time, Brother Rocco Meo was the first presiding elder of the Valley Mission.

Brother Meo held meetings Wednesday and Friday evenings. On Sundays they had one meeting in the morning, and then in the afternoon they would all gather at a nearby park for lunch, followed by a season of fellowship the rest of the day. Often, as they met in the converted chicken

coop, they had to contend with the cackling and squawking of the fowls on the other side of the wall. Despite this, the blessings were in abundance.

In May of 1951, Brother Alex Cavallaro, Sr., was ordained a deacon. Shortly thereafter, Sister June Jones was baptized. The place of baptism was a two-hour drive to the beach between Malibu and Zuma, at the Pacific Ocean.

The Testimony of Brother Robert A. and Sister Sarah Watson

Brother Watson was a citizen of Canada, and Sister Watson was a citizen of the United States. After their marriage, they lived in Windsor, Ontario and attended that Branch of the Church. The United States Immigration law at that time was very strict. If one was a US citizen living in another country, one was required to report yearly to the immigration office, informing it of one's whereabouts and intentions. If one failed to do so, it was impossible to ever return to the United States to live. Unfortunately, Sister Sarah forgot to do this. One day, while attempting to cross the border to visit in the United States, she was stopped by the Immigration Officer who, upon questioning her, learned that she had failed to report according to the law. Consequently, she was told that she would not be able to live in the United States again, which grieved her very much as her entire family lived in Detroit.

She appealed her case and, when it was time to go to court, she told her husband that she would not retain a lawyer, for the Lord—she felt—would represent her and correct the injustice. Her resolve was strengthened by a dream. She dreamed that she was called back to court where a judge was sitting behind his desk. He stood up and in his hand was her passport, upon which was written, "compassionately given." "Here's your passport," said the judge, "now what are you going to do with it?" She took the passport, and, holding it tightly, she replied, "I'm going back to my country, and I'm never coming back to live in Canada again." Saying that, she awoke, filled with joy.

When she went to court, everything was in place, just as she had dreamed. After the immigration officer made his report relative to the reason she had been living in Canada and why she was asking for her passport, he commented that she was the kind of citizen we want in our country. At this point, the judge extended his hand and presented her with her passport. The only things missing on the passport were the words she had seen in her dream, “compassionately given,” although Sarah recalls seeing those words in her mind’s eye.

Accordingly, Brother Bob and Sister Sarah moved to California in 1953, and started to attend the Bell Branch. About this time, Brother Rocco had become very ill and was having great difficulty in fulfilling his duties as presiding elder, especially considering that, for him, it was a 64-mile drive, round-trip, to the Valley. One Sunday, Brother Bob and his family were visiting the Valley Mission, and when he walked into the building Brother Meo heard a voice speak to him saying, “This man will relieve you.”

Shortly after this, he made the recommendation to Brother Loalvo that Brother Bob become presiding elder of the Valley Mission. Brother Loalvo concurred and presented his name at the next General Church Conference.

The news that he had been appointed presiding elder of the Valley Mission came as quite a surprise to both Brother Bob and his wife, Sister Sarah. When Brother Watson asked Brother Meo why he had been recommended for this responsibility, Brother Meo related to him the experience he had had weeks earlier when he first walked into the chicken coop.

Bob and his wife were unconvinced that this was the Will of God for them and decided to pray about the matter. During the following week, Bob had a dream in which he found himself visiting the home of one of the elders of the Valley Branch. This brother said to Bob, “I need you,” at which point Brother Watson began to pray for him, and he immediately received strength and health. He then asked him to pray for his wife who also was not well, and she, too, recovered. The dream reinforced to the

Watsons the fact that they were needed in the Valley Branch. Brother Bob, however, felt this was the type of decision he should not make on his own, and his wife, Sarah, was still unsure about what to do. For one thing, they had just recently moved to Los Angeles to be closer to the Bell Branch since there was a much larger group of children in that Branch. In addition, Bob now had employment near Bell, as well.

That Sunday, Sarah asked for prayer, and, while the brothers were administering to her, the spirit of God took her back to the time when her mother, Sister Farah Randazzo, was dying and she was taking care of her. She was standing outside her mother's bedroom where Bob had just shared with her the news that he was being called to the office of an evangelist. Sarah had misgivings at that time as well—expressing her concern that it would mean a lot of traveling and time away from the family. Overhearing the conversation from the other room, her mother called out to her, and Sarah, somewhat alarmed, came swiftly to her bedside. Her mother, although weakened because of her condition, spoke with conviction: “Sarah, don't you complain about this, because it is from God.” Sister Randazzo went on to say that on the previous night she had been given a dream where she saw twelve pillars, with Bob standing next to one of them. She then beheld a mantle fall upon him and a voice speak the words, “Here ye him, because I have anointed him from Heaven.” (It was some years later that this dream was fulfilled when Brother Bob was ordained into the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.) With this, all objections began to melt away, and Sarah supported her husband, which included relocating to the San Fernando Valley shortly thereafter.

Brother Rocco died not long after he was replaced, having served the Church faithfully and consistently in the Valley, which, for him, was a labor of love.

The San Fernando Valley Mission Becomes a Branch

In April 1955, the Mission was organized as a Branch, albeit the meeting place was still in that humble, converted chicken coop located on Brother Cavallaro's property. The first officers were:

Presiding Elder	Robert A. Watson
First Counselor	John Azzinaro
Second Counselor	Joseph Capone
Teacher	John Azzinaro
Assistant Teacher	Louis Parravano
Deacon	Alex Cavallaro, Sr.
Presiding Deaconess	Mary DiChiera
Assistant Deaconesses	Catherine Carneval, June Jones, and Sarah Watson
Secretary	Theresa Parravano
Financial Secretary	Louis Parravano
Treasurer	Sam Parravano
Trustees	Alex Cavallaro and Sam Parravano

The First Baptism

The first person to be baptized after the organization of the San Fernando Valley Branch was Martha Lotgering on May 15, 1955. She was baptized by Brother Nick Persico and confirmed by Brother V. James Loyalvo. The first child to be blessed was Thomas Howard Reed by Brother Louis Parravano on May 29, 1955, who had been ordained an elder a month earlier.

A Permanent “House of Worship”

Almost immediately after Brother Bob became presiding elder, he presented his vision to the Branch—the construction of a new building. Some felt there weren’t sufficient funds; however, with \$3,000 in the “building fund,” they began to search for a site that would accommodate all the members who lived in various parts of the Valley. Eventually, they bought a lot at 15157 Roscoe Blvd. that they all felt suited the desired purposes. After depositing a down payment of \$2,000, the Branch had \$1,000 left with which to start building.

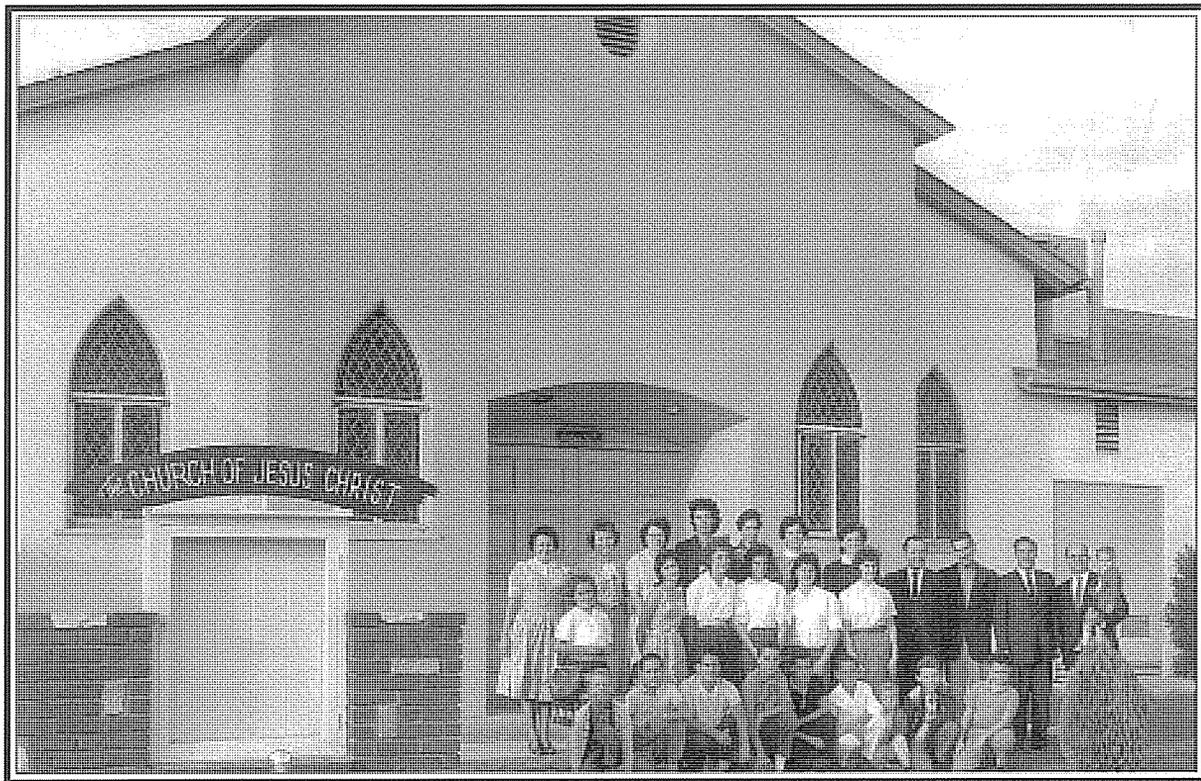
They decided to use the same plans that the Bell Branch had used for their building, with some modifications; and, on February 1955, they broke ground. After purchasing the lot, however, they bought some pews for \$1,000, leaving the Branch with no money left to begin construction.

When Brother Mark Randy heard of the Valley Branch's desire to build a Church, he was moved to pledge one month to oversee the beginning of the construction project. Next, the congregation was invited to a special meeting to discuss ways and means of raising money to continue building. When Brother Bob conveyed Brother Mark's promise to the Branch, they became excited, at which time Brother Alex Cavallaro, Sr. mysteriously got up and left the meeting. He returned shortly, dragging a pillowcase full of money that he had been saving for the day when they would decide to build a House of Worship. At this point, the spirit of giving began to spread throughout the congregation, and, although none of them had much money, one by one they all began to make pledges—in many cases, for amounts that they didn't even have yet! In all, the saints pledged to help raise the \$25,000 needed to complete the building. They departed with renewed hope and trust in the Lord that He would help them in this venture.

After helping in the first phases of the construction, Brother Mark left for home. The Lord then inspired Brother Frank Mercuri, a cabinet-maker, and Brother Joseph Capone to help the Valley saints in their endeavors. The brothers and sisters "pitched in" and helped these two brothers. Financial and physical help came from many parts of the California District and from other parts of the Church.

While the building was progressing, certain construction workers who were "on strike," began to harass the brothers who were working on the Church building. Undaunted by this annoyance, the brothers placed a large sign on the front of the lot that read, "labor being donated by Church members and friends," which put a stop to it. Meanwhile, Brothers Emil Carlini, Joseph Straccia, and John Dulisse arrived from Detroit and plastered the inner and outer walls of the Church. Brother Frank Ferrante donated an organ in memory of his deceased wife. It wasn't very long before the Valley members had a beautiful new edifice, erected to the honor of the Almighty.

The new building was dedicated on July 8, 1956, and many from throughout the States attended this special event, including Brother Wil-



San Fernando Valley Branch Building on Roscoe Blvd., 1960: pictured are the families of John and Betty Azzinaro, Anthony and Grace Brutz, Phil (not pictured) and Ann Damore, Ether and Ella Furnier, June Jones, Pearl Nester, and Robert and Sarah Watson

liam H. Cadman, General Church President, sharing the joy and blessings with the Valley saints. On July 22, 1956, Brother Peter Ferrante was the first person to be baptized after moving to the new church building.

Shortly after the building had been erected, a Ladies' Circle was organized, with Sarah Watson as the first president. They immediately went to work raising money to help pay off the debt owed on the building.

Miraculous Healing

By Brother John Azzinaro

Our little boy Danny took sick . . . with a cold and virus, and he began to complain of headaches, etc. We had prayer for him, and he himself would request to be prayed for, but he was not healed. We finally took him to the hospital for a test, including spinal taps.

We were informed that our boy had Spinal Meningitis, and that it was very fatal, [or] could leave him with a [permanent] physical disorder. They gave us no hopes.

Our church here fasted and prayed for our boy on March 3rd, and that night God answered our prayers and our neighbors were surprised to see our boy come home without any physical disorder, for they all knew how dreadful the disease of Spinal Meningitis really is. We are very thankful to our Heavenly Father that our boy is completely healed. We can say that we are serving a living God and that He is the same God today, as in the days of the prophets of old. . . . (*The Gospel News*, June 1956, p. 7)

The Valley Branch was blessed with a united ministry and exceptional members. Everyone worked in harmony with each other, bringing upon them "showers of blessings" from heaven. In subsequent years, other missions and branches sprang forth from the Valley Branch, to wit: Lindsay, California; Phoenix, Arizona; Yucaipa, California; and Tse Bonito, New Mexico. Although some members moved from the Valley Branch over the years, it was always replenished by others. The move to other areas of the country proved to be a blessing to that location. One of the outstanding memories of this Branch over the years is some of the Spirit-

filled performances by the Valley Branch Choir, under the directorship of V. James Loalvo.

Brother Anthony Brutz, an elder, and his family moved to the Valley Branch from Detroit in 1955. Brothers Frank Braiotta and Vito Buffa, both elders, moved to the Valley Branch in 1956 and 1957, respectively. In 1959, Brothers Anthony Brutz and Robert Ciarocchi made a trip to the Tule River Reservation, near Lindsay, to introduce the Gospel.

Brother V. James Loalvo and his family held meetings in the home of Brother and Sister Costarella, located in Delano, California, 150 miles north of the San Fernando Valley. Many blessings were received in their missionary endeavor in Delano.

THE LINDSAY MISSION

On September 21, 1959, a request was made by Sister Mary Dichiera to have meetings in Lindsay, California. Eventually, a Mission was established in Lindsay.

(Note: The history of Lindsay will be written in the next volume.)

THE YUCAIPA MISSION

In January 1960, Sister Wilsa Gilly asked Brother Mark Randy to hold meetings in Banning, California. Brother Mark shared this with Brother Robert A. Watson, who lived closer to this area; he answered the "Macedonian Call" by convening meetings at the Women's Club there for six months, and later on, at the Granger Hall in neighboring Yucaipa. Shortly afterwards, meetings were held in the homes of the Spatas and the Plummers.

(Note: The history of Yucaipa will be written in the next volume.)

THE TIJUANA, MEXICO MISSION

It is an undeniable truth that the missionary work in Tijuana started by the Sovereign Will of the Most High God. He, who is unchangeable, sliced through time and space, and, in His own inimitable fashion, revealed that Mexico was ready to receive the Good News of the Restored Gospel. It was not to be accomplished by the will of the flesh but by the direction of His Holy Spirit.

Testimony of Sister Evelyn Perdue

I was a young woman of twenty when I met this Gospel. My parents were Orthodox Jews. They taught me not to believe in Jesus. My mother was very bitter against Jesus, calling Him names that were very uncomplimentary. My dad mentioned that he was a good man, but never inspired any love in our hearts for Christ. As a child I used to think that the Gentiles were rather stupid for their beliefs, and I also thought as I looked at the pictures of Christ in some of the Catholic homes, that whoever had the idea of making up these pictures, really had a good racket for making money. One day while in a Gentile home, I happened to touch a New Testament. If I had touched a snake, I couldn't have felt any worse. I ran all the way home to wash my hands. I felt as if it were a terrible sin.

When I met up with this Gospel I was told about the wonderful miracles in the Church. To me they seemed fantastic. I was told about Christ—this man whom I didn't particularly care for. I just felt it wasn't possible for me to accept Jesus as the Son of God. As time went on, I fought it. Then I got to thinking that perhaps there was some truth in this story, because for almost 2000 years the name of Christ had not been dimmed. Many people have been killed but their names have never lived on like this one. When I was handed a New Testament I thought I would try reading it. If there was any truth to this, I wanted to know. A few months later I received the following dream: I dreamed the Lord appeared to me. He was clothed in snow-white flowing robes. Whether His feet were bare or not I cannot say for sure, although it seemed that way to me. He was on my left-hand side a short distance away from me. On my right-hand side was a gate. Behind were a great many people. Jesus beckoned unto me to come to Him. I went and, as I got close to Him, I knelt down and kissed His robes. When I arose I said unto Him,

“All of those people claim to believe in you, but they don’t.” He smiled and looked at me so sweetly and said, “Follow me.” He turned and started away and I followed.

When I awoke out of this dream, I didn’t attach much importance to it, thinking it was only a dream. I couldn’t feel that this was enough for me to accept Christ. As time went on I received more and more wonderful experiences. My people thought there definitely was something wrong with me, because I had brought a New Testament into the house. I had to warn my mother not to destroy it. I couldn’t talk about Jesus to her, for she would start saying things that I did not want to hear about our Lord. I found that I couldn’t see eye to eye with my entire family and our relationship became strained.

I had a wonderful experience in which I talked to a Nephite. I didn’t know at the time, but the Lord gave me a dream showing me who this man was. When I told the experience in Church, tongues were made manifest and the interpretation was, “What you say is true in heaven.” The Lord also appeared unto me in a dream telling me I was to be baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ. . . . I am from the House of Judah and my husband is from the House of Joseph.

In writing about the establishment of the Church in Mexico, Sister Perdue says that, shortly after her husband, Edward (always referred to as Eddie), was baptized, Sister Mary Loalvo had a dream in which she saw Brother Eddie standing with his feet planted in the Church and his arms stretched out toward the Mexican people. When she related this to her, Sister Perdue laughed, because it seemed an impossibility, knowing the quiet and unassuming nature of her husband.

A few years later, her husband had a dream in which he saw himself standing in a room. As he looked, a door opened, and behind it stood a beautiful woman, tall and stately, garbed in her native costume. A voice addressed him, saying, “Give this woman her baby.” When he related this dream to his wife, their simple interpretation was that the Church would go to the Indian people, not thinking that it was meant for them. In time, however, the dream was fulfilled in their own lives.

Sister Perdue had been afflicted for many years, and, after many major surgeries, was often bedridden. Beginning in 1949, she went through

a siege of illness that lasted five years, and the doctors were unable to help her. In 1951, she was admitted to the hospital and examined by some of the foremost specialists. After the examination, they told her that only an operation on her brain would relieve her affliction, with a 50 percent chance of survival. She asked the doctor, "Is that all you have to offer me?" He replied, "Well, what have you to lose? You are no help to anyone this way." Downcast, she left the doctor's office, telling him that she would think it over. She was afraid; she did not want to undergo another surgery.

After lying helpless for a few weeks at home, she asked her husband and daughter to take her to Church where she would be anointed for her affliction. The elder anointed her head with blessed oil and began to pray for her healing. During the prayer, a brother in the congregation had a vision in which he saw her frowning, as in great pain. Enveloping her head was a vapor of smoke, which soon lifted. She was now smiling. This experience gave her hope that some day the affliction would be removed.

In 1953, her affliction became worse. She went to Church again and was anointed. As the elder was praying, "Touch her with Thy Finger and heal her," a brother had a vision. The heavens were opened, revealing the stars and a hand reaching down and touching her. Despite all that happened, she was not healed.

Because of her suffering, she had prayed to the Lord to either heal her or take her home. Suddenly, she felt a strange, stirring sensation. She felt her spirit leave her body and begin to travel through space. She arrived at a spot where a small oval door appeared. Instinctively, she knew this was a door to heaven. Since the door was too small, she pleaded with God to grant her admission. The door increased in size, permitting her to enter. While climbing some steps that had appeared, she saw some wonderful things, and at the top of the stairs she saw Jesus Christ. He was radiant; His hair was parted in the middle, in page-boy style. Recognizing Him, she cried out, "You are Jesus. You are the Lord." Prostrating herself at His feet, she begged Him to touch her body and heal her. "You

are the only One who can heal me," she cried; "My, Lord, please heal me." He asked her, "Are you sure that you want to be healed?" She answered, "Yes, Lord." He told her what she must do to be healed. When her spirit returned to her body, she began to doubt that the experience was of God.

Sister Perdue does not reveal what the Lord said to her, but as her story unfolds, one understands the message. She continues in her own words.

My soul was tortured for two days and nights, fighting because I felt it was difficult to do what the Lord had commanded. Then again, I realized that by not obeying, a bedridden life would be worthless. I decided that I would do anything to get well. After my decision, I told my husband that I was going to obey what the Lord told me to do. I could not fight it any longer, for I knew it was of God. As soon as I told him, a great load lifted from me.

The following Wednesday evening I went to Church. While I was relating a part of my experience, Sister Lowther spoke in the gift of tongues. A brother had the interpretation: "Attention! These words are all true. It has come from God."

Three weeks later, upon the Lord's instructions, my husband and I began to work in Los Nietos, California, among the Mexican people.

Shortly after we had started this work, Sister Mary Loalvo—who had the dream where she saw my husband with his arms outstretched toward the Mexican people—came to me and asked me whether I had an inkling that we were going into the Mexican work at the time I related my experience. I replied that I did not have the faintest idea of that. I asked her if she knew. She said that she knew because at the time I was relating the experience, she recalled her dream about my husband. When she told me this, I felt a shock like an electric current going through my body, and I began to cry. At that moment, I knew, more than ever before, that we were doing what the Lord wanted us to do, and that He had gradually guided us. After working in Los Nietos for a while, I asked Sister Lowther if she had any sense of the tongues she had spoken. She replied, "Yes, I felt there was a work for you to do, but it would take time."

In September, 1959, Brother and Sister Luna met a man, while visiting Mexico, who was trying to keep a group of people together, as their minister had left them. He asked them if they knew a Spanish-speaking minister who would like to assist this group, as he was only a

layperson. They told him that they knew one. He begged them to ask Brother Perdue if he would minister to the group.

Knowing how we felt about Mexico, and the many times we had repeated that we did not care to go there, the Lunas hesitated to say anything to us. About three weeks later, the man from Mexico wrote to the Lunas and begged for a visit from Brother Perdue. This time they told us, and when we read the letter I felt a great surge of electricity go through me; I knew that this was the Will of God in our lives, and that we should go. When I told my husband, he felt the same as I.

At that time, we had worked in the Los Nietos Mission more than five years, and during this time we had prayed to God to give us at least one year of full-time labor in the field, and that my husband be released of any physical labor. For more than five years, my husband worked at a factory, swing shift, eight hours daily. At home, he would get a few hours of sleep after studying the Scriptures. Early every Saturday morning, we would visit as many families as possible. Often, our visiting lasted all day. On Sundays, we held meetings. We had a nice group in Los Nietos.

After hearing the letter sent to the Lunas, we decided to leave the Los Nietos Mission in care of two elders, while we went to Mexico to see if anything could be done. After arriving in Mexico, we met the man who had written to the Lunas. His name was Franco (a converted drunkard). He lived in the worst part of Tijuana, Mexico.

We held some meetings with his group [and others]. As soon as we started to hold meetings with Franco's group, the minister who had left them decided to return to them. We thought it best to stay away, as we didn't want to infringe on his work. Soon, we heard that he left them again, so we decided to go back.

Through Franco, we met a woman who desired to be a minister. At times, she would go with us to Libertad [where we held meetings]. One day, she told us that she had a lot in another section of Tijuana, and wanted us to see it. We went to see it, although we didn't trust her motives. The lot was in the area of Colonia Obrera, where our church is now located.

We liked the area very much and soon began visiting the few homes that were there. The people received us warmly, and every weekend they waited for our visit. In the meantime, we would go to Libertad, and hold meetings [in the afternoon], until such a time that we could leave that place. We didn't feel happy building upon another man's foundation.

One Sunday, as we were going to Colonia Obrera, the above-mentioned woman, called Paula, told brother Perdue that she had a dream that we were to have a church here (Colonia Obrera). We did not pay much attention to this, thinking that if the Lord wanted a church here, He would make the way.

On another drizzling Sunday morning, while Brother Eddy was praying, I felt a wonderful spirit. After prayer, I turned to my husband and told him that the Lord was going to have His Church on this high mountain.

One day, while holding an outdoor meeting in Colonia Obrera, two men, Alfonso Turibio (who later became an elder) and Pilar Barajas came to listen. They kept coming every Sunday with their families. Pilar asked us if we had a place upon which to build a church. We replied in the negative. He said, "I am in charge of distributing these lots. I have a choice lot that I would like to give to the Church." Weeping, he told us that once the Lord had saved him from a firing squad, and he wanted to do something for Him. We were glad to get the lot, with a hope to build a church upon it in the future. We put ourselves in the hands of the Lord, knowing we could do nothing on our own.

When the weather got too cold, we would crowd into the house of a married couple (our first baptisms). It was just a cardboard shack, but it protected us from the wind. A brother from the United States offered to build a larger house on the lot that had been donated so the couple could live in it, and we could also hold services there. Something had to be put on this lot to protect it from squatters. The structure that was built was merely a shell of a house, larger than the couple's home, cheaply made and without a floor. When it rained, it would leak, and we would always have a stream of water down the middle of the room.

In February 1960, my husband's company moved to another location. He could have gone with it, continuing in the same job, but we decided that it was best for him not to go with the company. We also felt that we were very close to something, and that now was the time to wait upon the Lord for His direction.

A couple of weeks prior to the April General Church Conference, we went to the home of Brother V. James Lovalvo, to tell him that we desired to leave the Los Nietos Mission permanently in the care of some elders and work in Mexico. We did not know if the General Church would send us full time, so we continued to do the best we could. When we related our feelings, Sister Mary Lovalvo told us of a dream she had the previous night, in which she saw us going to a desert place. There the Lord blessed us, and in those desert mountains, she saw pools of water,

in which children were swimming. I have not related all of her dream, but it was encouraging, as we felt that the Lord was leading us.

Brothers V. James Loalvo, Robert Watson, and James Heaps attended the following General Church Conference and, upon their return, Brother Loalvo informed us that the Church was backing us, and that we could go to Mexico. Immediately, we left our home, leaving our daughter, Norma, to take care of it during our absence. We moved into a trailer near the border of Mexico, and stayed there one month.

Meanwhile [in Mexico], two young men (who later were baptized) built a 10' x 16' room for us. We moved into this room before it was completed. We had only three walls, using a blanket to form a fourth one. Later, another room was added. We were overjoyed to be here. At least, we were trying to do something for the Lord. We had a small table, two folding chairs, a camp cook stove and two cots. These mountains were very dark at night. There was no water, and no electricity; we used kerosene lamps. There were many large rats, because of the brush nearby, some snakes, and the howling of the coyotes could be heard at night.

Despite the scarcity of homes in this area (Libertad), we would always have a nice group meeting with us on Sundays. People would come from other areas to meet with us. Five people were baptized in this area.

At this writing, Sister Evelyn Perdue and Brother Edward have gone to their reward in Paradise. Brother and Sister Perdue are legends in their own time. History will note that they, with their daughter, Norma, were true missionaries in every sense of the word. Nothing deterred them from their work in Mexico. They were persecuted, mocked, threatened, and afflicted, yet, they refused to submit to the adversities that faced them daily.

They continued to witness for the Lord, preaching and teaching the Good News of Salvation and the Restored Gospel to all with whom they came in contact.

(Note: Because this volume of history is only up to 1960, Sister Perdue's interesting account ends here. Since 1950, the church in Mexico has grown spiritually and numerically. Besides Tijuana, other Branches and Missions have been established. Further account will be given in the next volume.)

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 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—was marrying Edward Perdue of the Tribe of Joseph, another Israelite, was more than a coincidence. . . . 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. . . . We met several times during lunch hour and, as we conversed, her love for Jesus Christ, Our Lord, never ceased to amaze me. I shared her love for the Lord. . . .

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. . . . 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.

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, and 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. But if I need some money, I will ask you for it."

Eventually, a Church was built on the same hill [in Tijuana] 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 couldn't believe my eyes. There also was the Church filled to capacity with the sound of beautiful singing echoing all around. . . .

Brother Eddie's preaching was a blessing; full of God's Spirit and authority. Sister Evelyn was like a mother to all. . . . With Brother Eddie at the helm, the work among the Seed of Joseph grew rapidly. . . .

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.

THE MODESTO BRANCH

In January 1951, Brother Mark Randy heard a woman's voice cry out so loudly that it awakened him. He thought it was someone nearby. Upon investigating, he found nothing. The next day, while having lunch with his father, Brother Salvatore Randazzo, he related his experience. His father said, "Let us pray about it." After prayer, his father told Mark, "I feel that the voice you heard came from California." Brother Mark was dubious about it and promptly returned to his work.

The following day, he received a letter from Manteca, California, from his wife's uncle, Vito Cipponeri, inviting him to go to California and start a mission. Brother Mark had no desire to leave Detroit, Michigan as he was laboring for the Church in Port Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Canada.

He answered his uncle's letter, stressing the fact that having a mission in his home could entail persecution by his relatives and friends. They continued their correspondence, while the saints in Detroit were asked to pray whether it was God's will for him to make this move. At that time, Brother Nick Pietrangelo had an experience that prompted him to help in the work at Port Huron, while Brother Joseph Lovalvo and others, went to Sarnia and Mount Brydges, Ontario.

In June 1951, in the company of Charles Van Bree and his family, the Randys left for California. A few days later, they arrived in Manteca, California, where their relatives received them cordially. To Brother Mark's surprise, he was asked to hold a meeting that night, in which a good spirit prevailed. This was his first meeting in California. After retiring to bed, he had a dream in which a man told him to leave the city that day. Accordingly, they departed for Los Angeles and then San Diego.

Although he felt to stay in each place he visited, the Spirit of God led him back to Manteca. He was unsuccessful in finding a place to live in Manteca. One day, he remembered a dream told to him by Sister Gammicchia of Detroit that indicated his place of abode would be in Modesto. Not knowing where Modesto was, he inquired of his uncle who told him that it was 16 miles south of Manteca. They left for Modesto, and the same day they found a house and the promise of a job.

The beginning was difficult, as they were in financial trouble. The Sunday following their arrival in Modesto, they held the first meeting. Brother Rocco Meo and his family went to visit with the Randys. Being down to their last ten dollars, Mark's wife, Mary, asked him, "What shall we do?" He told her to spend it all for food, for if God had sent them to California, He would provide. After the Meos left, he and his wife prayed for temporal and spiritual support.

"We were overjoyed," wrote Brother Mark, "despite the fact that we had our last meal and no money. A few days later, a letter arrived with seventy-five dollars and a note from Brother Jim [Lovalvo], saying that he had a dream in which he saw my wife having only ten dollars with which to buy groceries, and he was told to help us since that (\$10) was all we had left. We were grateful because we now knew that God was with us."

Brother Mark writes that their meetings were wonderfully blessed but that they were not without persecutions. Because of the many complaints of a neighbor, Mark was served with a notice to appear at a zoning hearing. At the hearing, he was exonerated from any wrongdoing, with an added compliment from the chairman who said, "When our

parents moved to Modesto, meetings in homes were very common; I wish we had more like Mr. Randy." They were given the privilege to hold meetings in their home until they could find a suitable place.

The small group grew in number; some had been baptized, and others arrived from the East. Among them were his parents-in-law, Joseph and Pietrina Cipponeri, Vito and Grace LaCommare, Joseph and Virginia Loyalvo, Alex and Louise Robinson, Joseph and Lena Bologna, Vito and Josephine Buffa and others.

They met often, with the Lord pouring His blessings upon them. The small group received many experiences in the form of dreams and healings. Brother Mark relates one of the healing experiences:

One evening, Jennie Catalano phoned saying that Charles Van Bree had fainted and she didn't know what to do. I suggested that she and her family pray and I would come as quickly as possible. When I arrived, I found that Charles had awakened, and the fever was gone. In every respect, he looked well. Jennie said that the family had knelt in prayer, and while praying, Charles arose and said that he suddenly felt well.

After that occurrence, there were several people baptized. Among them were Jennie and John Catalano, John and Clodell Cipponeri, Marian and Peenie Catalano, Marian Buscaino, Eddie Costanzi and others. I was elated and satisfied that God had brought us to California. However, the voice he heard that night in Detroit pleading, "God help me," continued to perplex him.

While meeting at the Catalano's home one day, Brother Mark mentioned the "voice" experience and that it had been the reason for his move to California. Sister Jennie asked him when he had heard this voice, and, after he told her, she stood up and cried out in a voice similar to the one in his experience. Upon hearing her cry, his entire body was filled with an inexplicable emotion, knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the voice he had heard in Detroit belonged to her. Composing herself, she related her experience:

My daughter had an altar in her bedroom filled with saints and flowers; and there, she would pray in her Catholic manner. One day, when I could no longer take the abuse and suffering that involved our married life, I threw myself upon this altar and cried out, "God help me!" I then lay in bed, crying and crying.

I would always visit fortunetellers and sorcerers, thinking they could help me to find what I was looking for, but it only made things worse. I now know that it was the hand of God, and only Him, who gave Brother Mark the experience of a woman crying. I was that woman.

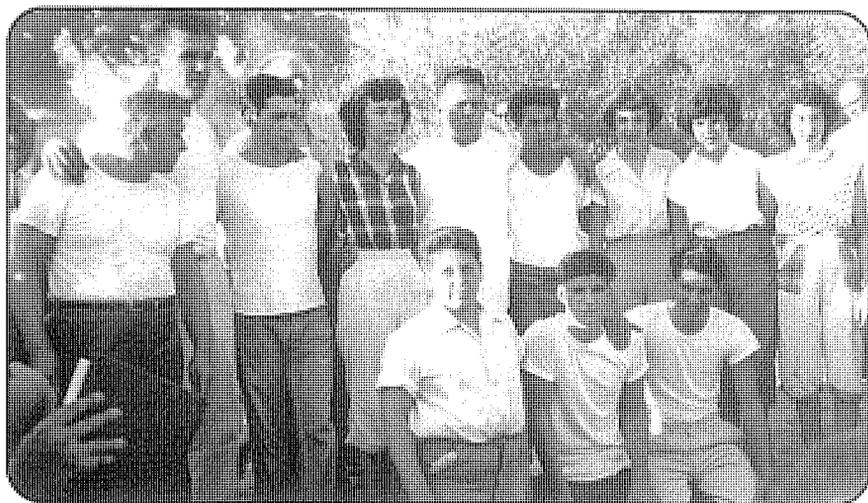
Many of the incidents experienced by the small group were humorous, as well as solemn. One evening, while Brother Mark was preaching, someone disconnected the fuses and they were left without lights. Since it was a Sunday night, and the stores were closed, he had to preach in the darkness. Another time, while holding an evening service, some teenagers exploded firecrackers to disturb them. One of the explosives was so forceful that it unhinged the door.

One evening, as the meeting continued undisturbed, Charles Van Bree arose and exclaimed, "Thank God, we had a wonderful meeting; no one disturbed us." However, as they left the meeting, they found all their cars gone. Despite these occurrences, they enjoyed wonderful meetings.

One Sunday evening, as the service was in progress, John Cipponeri and his wife entered carrying their little boy who was burning with a fever. Brother Mark asked them why they hadn't brought the child to a doctor, whereupon John answered, "You are a man of God. Pray for him, and he shall be well." The boy was anointed, and after prayer, the fever left him.

As the group began to grow, the need for a suitable place for services became the important priority. They found a place on Grover Road, in the Prescott Hall, where they began to hold meetings. Soon others arrived to increase the small flock. The Randy's home became a "stopping off" place for many.

The following few paragraphs are in Brother Mark's own words with only minor corrections:



Baptized at the Modesto Conference in 1954: (Standing) Joe Nicosia, Sr., Leonard James Lovalvo, John Flow, Rachel (Meo) Flow, Bill Meo, John Capone, Rose Lovalvo, Sharon Lovalvo, Nancy Camarda, (kneeling in front) Dan Parravano, Joe Nicosia, Jr. and Leonard Lovalvo

In 1954, we hosted a conference that shall never be forgotten, for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the twelve baptisms, and the one renewal. Brother Jim Lovalvo, had made his residence in Los Angeles . . . was chosen district president. At that time, we met every three months at pre-selected places. . . .

We were a young mission (Modesto), but full of zeal and the love of God. Early in 1954, he asked all of California to fast and pray for the gifts promised to the Church. . . .

In Modesto, we appointed a fast and prayer meeting at our home. . . . [On] Saturday morning, we arose early, fed our three children, and then dedicated our home and ourselves for those who would come.

As Brother Alex and Sister Louise Robinson entered our home, they said, "We feel like we're walking into a holy sanctuary." Others expressed the same. As we prayed, I had an experience [in which] I felt the presence of Jesus. He said, "If you truly desire these gifts, hunger and thirst after them, as I said to those of Jerusalem to hunger and thirst after righteousness."

At Conference on Sunday morning, tongues were spoken. It was like the voice of God touching every heart. One visitor told his son, "Let's get out of here or we, also, will be baptized." Others said, "It is like the day of Pentecost." Our cups were full to overflowing. . . .



Conference in Modesto, 1954: pictured are the following:
 Brother and Sister Pasqua, Mark Randy Family, Sam and Rose
 Randazzo, Robert M. and Nancy Watson, V. James Lovalvo
 Family, Joseph Nicosia Family, Joseph Lovalvo Family, Robert A.
 Watson Family, John and Pauline Dulisse and John Azzinaro

Modesto was organized as a Branch on March 24, 1955, with the following officers:

Presiding Elder	Mark Randy
First Counselor	Joseph Lovalvo
Second Counselor	Alex Robinson
Teacher	Vito "Bill" LaCommare
Deacons	Joseph Cipponeri and Eddie Castanzi
Deaconesses	Mary Randy, Virginia Lovalvo, and Louise Robinson

In 1956, the Modesto Branch bought a lot at 329 W. Briggsmore Avenue. The Church was built and dedicated on January 20, 1957 and paid in full by 1962. Brother V. James Lovalvo was the dedicatory speaker. During the service, a blind brother saw Jesus standing by the pulpit who said, "This day, eat of My body and drink of My blood in remembrance of Me." We partook of the Sacrament, and the blessings of the Lord were manifested abundantly.

In 1951, Sunday School was organized at the home of John Cipponeri with 15 persons attending. Charles Van Bree was elected Superintendent.

The Missionary Benevolent Association was organized November 5, 1952, in the home of John and Jennie Catalano by Louis Parravano, who was at that time an organizer of the GMBA. Marian Catalano was elected president.

The Ladies' Circle was organized on May 16, 1953, at the home of the Catalanos by Sister Sadie Cadman and Sister Bittinger of Monongahela, Pennsylvania, with Mary Randy elected president.

The above auxiliaries of the General Church are still strong and active to this date.

The Modesto Branch has been very active in all phases of endeavor. It has spaghetti dinners from time to time to raise money for good causes. It also started a newsletter in 1960, edited by Brother Mark Randy.

Testimony of Brother Joseph Lovalvo

My family and I moved from Detroit, Michigan to Modesto, California in August 1953. Because I was not a native Californian, nobody would hire me, even though I passed several tests on various jobs. I finally went to work for Brother Mark Randy doing carpentry work and painting houses.

Two years later, the District of California asked me to go on home missionary work in California. My brother, Jim, was president of the District at that time, and the District was very missionary-minded. I replied that, if it was the Will of God, I would go.

When I returned home from Conference, I called my wife and children together, and we cried out in prayer for His direction. After prayer, we talked it over and came to the conclusion that, if it was my desire to accept the District's request, I should do so.

My family consisted of my wife, Virginia, and four children: Leonard, Rose, Sharon, and Faye. At that time, I owed \$2,000, which I had borrowed for a down payment on my house. My wife said that she would take care of the children; and my son, Leonard, who had recently graduated from high school, said, "Dad, you go and preach the Gospel, and I will take care of mother and the girls." He had just gotten a job with a cabinet shop.

I now knew that it was the Will of God for me to go on home missionary work. At the next District Conference, in the middle of

1955, I told the brothers at Conference that I had quit my job and was ready to go. The elders encircled me and my brother Jim laid hands on me and prayed. He offered a very inspired prayer, asking God to bless and accompany me with signs and wonders, and that His Power would be with me. Several experiences were given which encouraged me very much.

The following month, I left Modesto and my family and went to Monterey, California. I knew one family who lived there. They welcomed me in their home and treated me with great love and respect. I started to preach the Restored Gospel on the streets of Monterey and, finally, I was invited into some of their homes.

I also went to the following cities in California: San Jose, Richmond, and Carmel. I spent three days in Monterey, three days in San Jose and a day and a night in Richmond.

The District gave my family \$65 a week. It was the best the Church in California could do at that time. My brother, Jim, and the District supported me with their love and prayers. I didn't take any part of the \$65 with me. I preached in faith, and God provided for me through strangers who took me [into] their homes and provided my needs.

In the two and a half years of my missionary work, I baptized eighteen persons and renewed three into fellowship. The glory and power of God followed me wherever I went. Some ministers who heard me preach invited me to preach in their churches. Healings and miracles followed me everywhere, just like in the days of the apostles. I was given power, on several occasions, to cast out evil spirits from possessed people, which caused strangers to marvel at the power of God.

I thank the District of California for the financial assistance given to my family and for their prayers in my behalf. I concluded my missionary work in 1957. I continued preaching the Gospel among the Seed of Joseph in California and Mexico and also to the Gentiles everywhere.

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

During the years of 1953 and 1954, some members of the Bell Branch began to move into the Anaheim area. These included: Stanley and Annette Labanauskas, George and Barbara Heaps and family, Joseph and Sadie Nicosia, George and Mary Spata, Elizabeth Simpson and family, Anna Alms and family, and Bertha Mae Trujillo and family. All of the

above members continued to attend the Sunday services at the Bell Branch. Because of the distance separating the above members from Bell, it was decided to hold services closer to their homes. Consequently, Brother George Heaps began holding mid-week services in the homes of the saints in Anaheim.

Some time later, Brother James and Sister Margaret Heaps moved into the home of their daughter, Bertha Mae. Clarence and Anna Kirkpatrick also joined the saints in Anaheim. Evangelist James Heaps, Elder George Heaps, and Teacher Clarence Kirkpatrick led the small group. Services were continued until 1958, at which time they were organized as a separate mission under the jurisdiction of the Bell Branch.

In a short while, the members began to look for a building in which to hold services. To their dismay, the least expensive rent was \$80 a month for only one meeting a week, which was not acceptable to them; so they decided to look for a place to purchase. Meanwhile, Sister Mary Spata gave them a large room in her home to use as a meeting place until a place of their own could be found.

Soon, Brother James Heaps, his wife, and Sister Mary Spata began to look for a suitable place within the group's financial means, as property values were rising rapidly. One day they were directed by a stranger to the property on the corner of Orange and Webster Streets (2440 W. Orange). It had been put up for sale the previous night. When they stepped on the property—before they had even looked inside of the warehouse building—they felt that it was the end of their search.

When they inquired about the price, they were satisfied, as it seemed reasonable. They also knew that the property would not be on the market very long. Brother Heaps discussed the matter with the two sisters, with the result that he presented the owners with a deposit. The next step was to obtain a permit from the Anaheim Planning Commission to convert the warehouse into a place of worship.

To their utter disappointment, the group learned that property owners in that area were protesting this type of conversion. The Planning Commission instructed them to draw a sketch, showing the intended

improvements which would be done on the building to make it suitable for a place of worship and then petition the neighborhood for approval.

Brother Charles Alms drew the sketch, and Brothers James and George Heaps began to solicit from door to door with the petition, getting 92 signatures, including 50 whose names had previously been on the opponent's petition, which was a misrepresentation of the true facts. When the brothers went before the Planning Commission two weeks later, their permit was approved—despite the opposition—and referred to the City Council for final approval.

Immediately the opponents began to search for ways and means to stop the erection of the church building. When the Council met, they brought to its attention a city law which stated that every church must have at least one acre of land for its structure; and since the property which the brothers and sisters purchased did not meet that requirement, the permit should be denied. Notwithstanding this opposition, the brothers were advised by the Council to renew their petition before the Planning Commission.

At the subsequent Commission meeting, George Heaps stated the purpose and intent of the Church's petition, whereby some of the opponents said that there were enough churches in the area, and since they (the Church people) were such a small number, they should join one of the other churches.

At this juncture, Brother George, addressing the Commission, stated that the "Books of Lenin and Stalin out sold the Bible in Russia, but he hoped that the day would never come in the land of America when people would be denied the right to worship God according to the desires of their hearts."

Hearing these impassioned words, the Planning Commission again voted in favor of the Church and advised the brothers to appear before the City Council in two weeks and be heard again. As Brother George left the meeting, two men grabbed him, accusing him of calling them communists. Brother George disengaged himself from their grasp, telling them that he had in no wise implied they were communists and was

sorry if they had taken offense at his words. With that, he excused himself and went home.

At the next Council meeting, a large number of people from the opposition attended. In comparison, the brothers representing the Church were very few. The night before the above meeting, Brother George Spata had a dream in which he saw the small Church group in Council chambers. A man appeared to him, and instructed him to tell the group to "remain quiet, as he would speak for them." Brother Spata felt that the brothers should say as little as possible, as the Lord would fight for them. This advice was followed without question.

When the time came to speak, Brother George said very little. Conversely, the opponents presented all sorts of arguments why the permit should be denied. As they were finishing their arguments, a strange man walked in, dressed in working clothes, and asked the Council for permission to speak. Being granted this, he spoke on behalf of the Church. The members of the Church did not know this man, nor have they ever seen him since that meeting. Whoever he was, God must have sent him to befriend and champion the cause of the saints. After this gentleman was through speaking, the Council called for a vote, and the permit was approved by a majority of 3 to 2. God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

Returning home joyfully, the six working members of Anaheim began to work on the warehouse they had purchased, starting the job with a firm purpose of converting it into a house of worship. Brothers from the Bell and San Fernando Valley Branches also helped in the remodeling of the structure.

The inside of the building was completely remodeled. The tin roof was replaced with a durable material, and stucco was used on the outside of the building. When the remodeling was completed, it had a seating capacity of 175 persons. On October 15, 1960, the structure was dedicated as The Church of Jesus Christ—a place to worship Almighty God and His Son Jesus Christ—the House of the Lord.

The Missionary Benevolent Association (MBA) met on Sunday evenings, with prayer meetings held on Wednesday Evenings. Since all the members of Anaheim were still members of the Bell Branch MBA, it was resolved to have two brothers come from San Diego and organize an MBA in Anaheim, which was done.

(NOTE: The Organization of the Church in Anaheim as a Branch occurred in 1961. The rest of its chronicle will be in the next edition of the History of The Church of Jesus Christ.)

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

(This brief history was taken from the writing of Brother Ronald Nichols.)

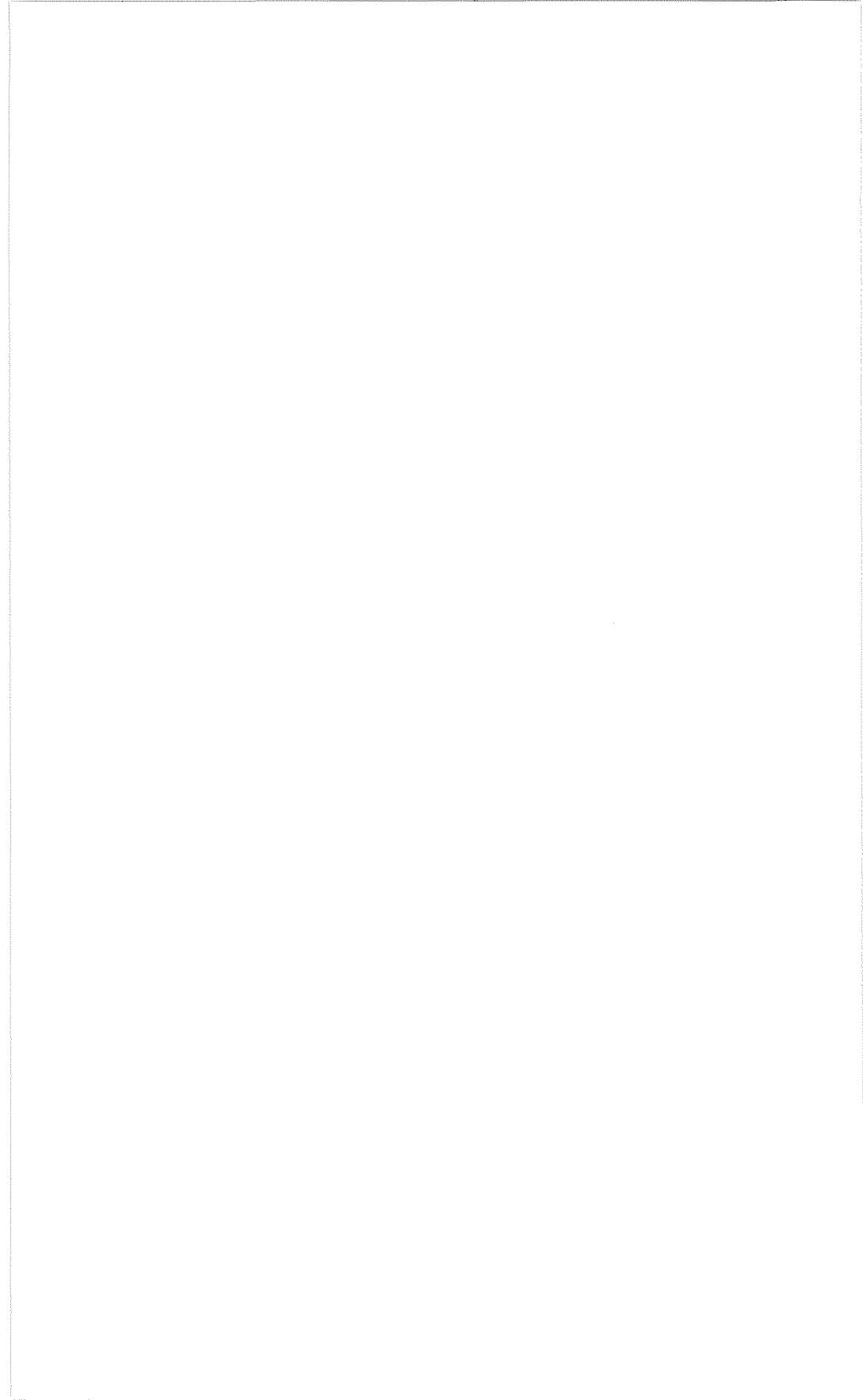
The mission work in the San Francisco Bay area did not actually start in San Jose, but in Berkeley, California. The first meetings were held in the home of Brother Guido and Sister Antoinette Marinetti in 1954. Meetings were also held in South San Francisco at the homes of Brother Joe and Sister Lucille Campagna and Brother Tulio Lacivita. The Campagnas had moved to South San Francisco from Modesto where they had recently been baptized. Later, Brothers Tulio and Guido returned to the East, and the Campagnas moved to Santa Clara, which is adjacent to San Jose.

From April 1955 to 1958, Joseph Loalvo was appointed to head a missionary effort in the District of California. Brother Loalvo concentrated his efforts in the Monterey area and some of his time in San Jose. During that time, he stayed with Brother Campagna.

In 1956, at the Stevens Creek Reservoir, Brother Loalvo baptized Dominic DeGenero. This was the first baptism in the San Jose area. Nunzio Giordano was baptized in the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz. The brothers and sisters drove approximately thirty miles, on a stormy day, to witness the baptism. This brother became a pillar in the San Jose

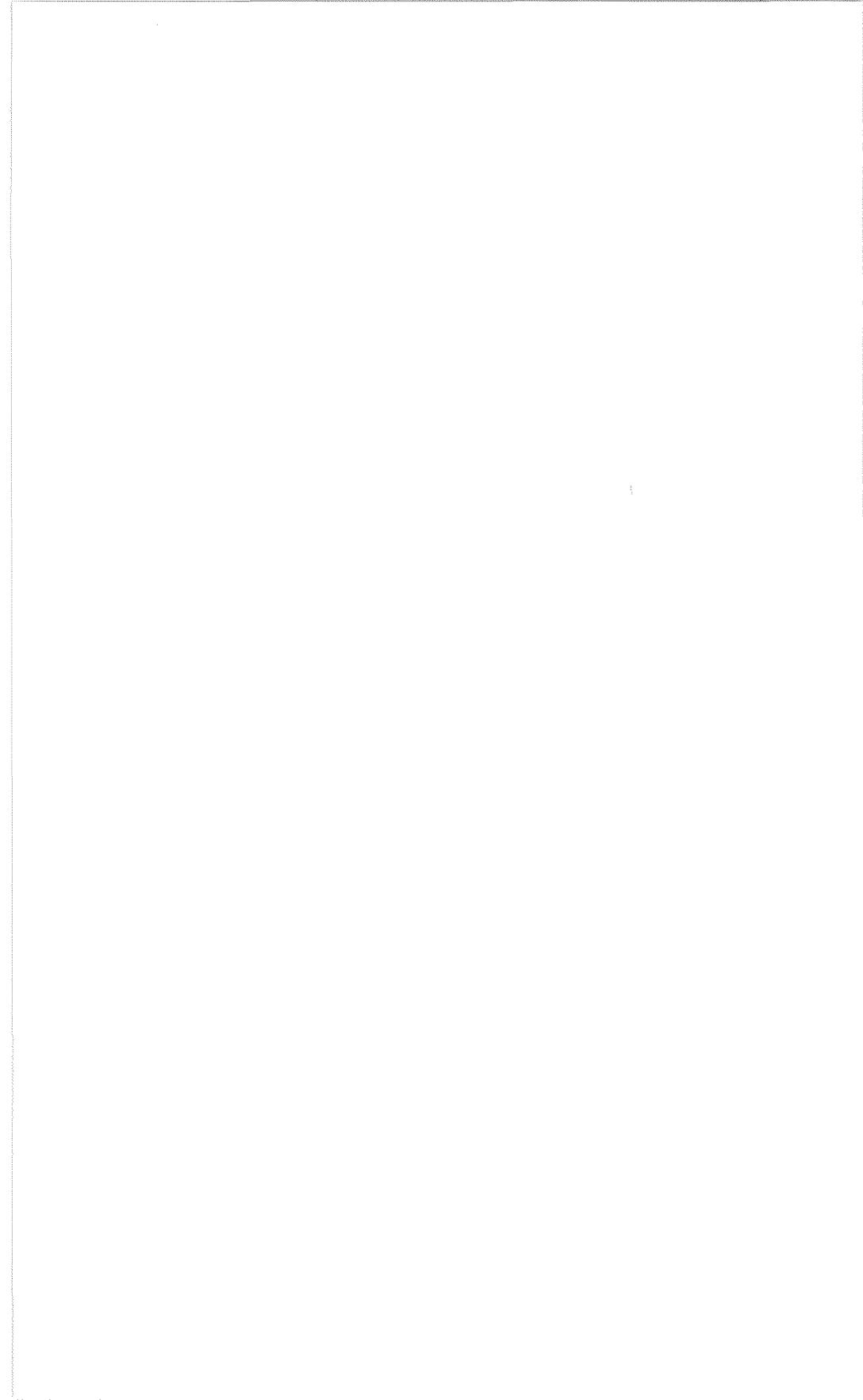
Mission. He was ordained a deacon in 1957 and a teacher in 1960. Brother Giordano passed on to his reward on December 24, 1973. During his 13 years in the Church, he read The Book of Mormon 40 times, in three different languages.

During the span of 1955-1968, the Mission held services at various places in San Jose. Many times, the meetings were held in the homes of brothers and sisters. Services were also held in different buildings, including the YMCA facility.



7

History
of the
Native American
Work



CHAPTER SEVEN

After the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed.
2 Nephi 30:3

It shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fulness of my gospel shall be preached unto them. 3 Nephi 20:30

A brief reference was made in Chapter I of the Church's understanding that the Native Americans are a part of the House of Israel. This belief has had such a profound impact on the focus of its missionary program, that it was decided to devote an entire chapter to this area.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN AND THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

According to the Bible, the Nation of Israel was composed of twelve tribes, who descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, and according to The Book of Mormon the descendants of one of these sons, Joseph, came to the land of America by way of ships that had been constructed through the inspiration of God. This immigration from ancient Jerusalem took place just prior to the dispersion of Israel by the Babylonians. These descendants of ancient Israel, who we sometimes refer to as the Seed of Joseph, arrived safely in what was identified by God as a promised land where they flourished into civilizations unparalleled in greatness for that era. Known today as the Native Americans, sadly, they would witness the slow destruction of their people and the eventual violent taking of their lands. When they turned from the righteousness of their forefathers, their blessings were withdrawn. Europe would invade these shores and, ultimately, tribes from across two continents became defeated nations.

The Master Plan of the Restoration of Israel already had been set in motion, however, and our early Church Fathers understood this. Hear the words of Jesus, Himself, echoing down the corridors of time, as recorded in the 21st Chapter of 3 Nephi, in The Book of Mormon:

. . . These things which I declare unto you, hereafter of myself. . . shall be made known unto the Gentiles that they may know concerning this people who are a remnant of the House of Jacob . . . that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed [Joseph], that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which He hath covenanted with His people, O House of Israel.

Less than six months after the Church was established on April 6th, 1830, a special conference was held at Fayette, New York. During this conference, which continued three days, the utmost harmony prevailed, and a desire was manifested by all the saints to go forward and labor with all their power to spread the great and glorious principles of truth.

At this time, a great desire was manifested by several of the elders respecting the remnants of the House of Joseph, the Lamanites residing in the West, knowing that the purposes of God were great respecting that people. They hoped that the time had come when the promises of the Almighty in regard to them were about to be accomplished; that the Native Americans would receive the Gospel and enjoy its blessings.

The Journey of Parley Pratt and Traveling Companions

Shortly thereafter, a revelation was received directing Peter Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Ziba Peterson and Parley Pratt to go on a mission to the Indians, which they started in October of 1830. They encountered much adversity on this trip and were diverted from their original plans, actually experiencing more success in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Continued Revelation under the Leadership of Wm. Bickerton

God continued to reveal His Will regarding the work of the Church among the Seed of Joseph under the leadership of William Bickerton.

The following revelation was received on November 8, 1861, one year prior to the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Thus saith the Lord, I will purify my Church and my servants shall go and preach the Gospel to the Indians of America. Go, saith the Lord, and I will go with you, and they shall humble themselves before you. For the day and the hour of the Lord is come. When you go to the Indians, tell them Jesus died to save them. Tell them they are the Seed of Abraham. Tell them what I did for their forefathers when they were carried away into Babylon, how that I brought them again into their own land. And tell them that I will again gather them to their own lands, for I, the Lord, have spoken it.

This experience is a powerful confirmation of the message conveyed in the Preface of The Book of Mormon, written by the ancient prophet Moroni, some 1450 years beforehand, and certainly underscores the importance of the Church's role among the Native Americans. Apostle Robert A. Watson referred to this responsibility as the Church's "*Divine Commission*" in a Church-published booklet by the same name. In truth, we see through scripture and revelation that this commission is nothing short of a sacred charge.

In 1868 there was a growing dialogue among many of the brothers with respect to the merits of encouraging a large part of the Church to move west. The opponents of this move pointed out the revelation that the Church received regarding the construction of the Green Oak, Pennsylvania Church building, which they believed reflected Divine direction to remain in the east.

Brother William Cadman was asked to inquire of God as to the course of action the Church should take in this matter. After much prayer, Brother Cadman said that God revealed to him that He would provide the saints with a home in the Indian territory by the preaching of the Gospel.

In the April 1868 Conference in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, Brother Cadman reported on this revelation, and there were several confirmations evidenced in the meeting. William Bickerton, followed in-

stantly with these words: "Verily, verily, saith the Lord God, the time has come that salvation go to the Lamanites. . . ." (Cadman History, p. 50) Both of the above revelations were endorsed by the conference and placed on record.

At the following Conference, held in Green Oak in July 1868, the General Church commissioned three brothers, William Bickerton, William Cadman, and Benjamin Meadowcroft, to go to the Indian Territory for the purpose of preaching to the Indians. They met with Louis Downing, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation; however, little was accomplished. It is noteworthy that these brothers also met with African Americans on this trip, and there is evidence to conclude that the Gospel message was received more favorably by this group than the principal targets of their mission.

At the Conference of July 1869, the Indian Mission was laid aside and abandoned. Brother Cadman fought against this decision but was soundly defeated.

At the Spring Conference of 1870, a number of our people were interested in the description of land in Tennessee. Brother Cadman said that when a number of our people moved to Tennessee, it was an act of unbelief in what was revealed to our Church concerning the Indian work and that from that time on the spirit of unbelief took possession of our people, with the Church retrogressing steadily.

In October of 1870, at the General Church Conference, Brother Cadman persuaded the Church to determine what went wrong with the mission to the Indians so that we could correct ourselves. However, instead of reviewing the Indian Mission, they ridiculed him, saying there was no reason for an investigation of the Indian Mission. Needless to say, Brother Cadman left this Conference feeling very disappointed. In 1871, the Green Oak Church building burned down.

In July 1873, Brother Charles Brown had a dream in which he and some other brothers heard a rapping sound coming from a coal mine and concluded that there were men trapped inside calling for help; they finally brought the men out to safety and they had the appearance of being

American Indian. The interpretation of this dream given by Brother William Cadman was that these men who were trapped in the mine represented the condition of the Native American—we had made one effort to deliver them and failed, but if we would not give up and try again, we would be successful. This interpretation was accepted and Brother Cadman said he was certain that the revelation came from God.

In the General Conference of July 1874, Brother Bickerton preached from Isaiah, stating that we were Israel and that the covenants made to Israel were ours, also. Brother Cadman said that we have been encouraging ourselves by the promises made to Israel under the covenants and have neglected the first step, which is preaching the Gospel to the Seed of Joseph. He said that the Spirit revealed to him that we are Israel by the laws of adoption under the Restored Gospel, and that by the performances of our duties towards Israel, we have the promise of being partakers with them in the benefits of the covenants made to them.

When Brother Bickerton returned home from a trip out west, he stated he had met with three Choctaw Indians. He gave them a Book of Mormon and informed them that he and others had been in the Indian Territory preaching the Gospel several years earlier. Brother Bickerton said that they wanted him to go with them to their people to preach the Gospel. He told them he was not able to do so at the present time, because he was sent to select a suitable location for his people to move to. He said they would try to move as close to them as they possibly could, and, as soon as they were settled in, they would go down to their territory to preach to them.

Observations of William Cadman

At the October 1899 Conference, Brother Cadman stated with reference to the subject of the Gathering, that they had placed the temporal before the spiritual, and that this was the fundamental error of the entire Kansas affair. He further stated that this was also a contradiction to the revelation that he had received, namely, that “the Lord would provide us a home in the Indian Territory by the preaching of the Gospel.” He said

that the Church was just where they were in the winter of 1867-8, which was 32 years prior. Brother Cadman likened the laying aside of the Indian Mission to the Israelites. They approached the borders of the land and became frightened through their blind unbelief and wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until all the unworthy unbelievers were dead.

In the July Conference of 1900, the Lucyville, Pennsylvania Branch presented a communication regarding carrying the Gospel to the Indians. After this communication, a resolution was passed as follows: "Resolved that we do not consider ourselves safe in not making more efforts than we have in the past in spreading the Gospel, and that each elder put forth greater efforts in the future in that line." It was further resolved that this have special application to carrying the Gospel to the Native Americans. It was at this Conference that God manifested to the Church that we had the Gospel purer than any other church and that He would employ us for the accomplishment of this purpose.

According to Brother Cadman, the Church retrogressed in size until the year 1904, when there was only one of the original Twelve Apostles left. Some had withdrawn from the Church, and some had died.

In the July Conference of 1904, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles was refilled and the blessings of God were manifested. At that time, another mission was sent to the Lamanites, but little was accomplished. Brother Cadman said that most of the brothers participating in that mission have proven that they were not in the faith. He went on to say that in 1907, there were only four apostles left who were still standing in the Faith of the Church, of those who were ordained in 1904. He said, "God will perform this work if He has to reduce His Church to one man. The Word of God says that the Gentiles are to carry the Gospel to the Lamanites and His Word cannot be broken, and, if we do not do it, the Lord will raise up willing workers who will."

Observations of William H. Cadman

Many years later, Brother William Cadman's son, Brother William H. Cadman, developed the same sense of urgency his father had with respect

to carrying the message of the Restored Gospel to the Native American. As *The Gospel News* founder and chief editor, he used this medium often to share with the rest of the Church all the experiences and blessings enjoyed by the missionaries who were laboring to spread the Gospel. In response to comments made reflecting an apparent laxity in the Church's missionary efforts, Brother Cadman wrote:

... I think you hit the nail on the head when you say that you feel that we are doing too little towards the spreading of the Restored Gospel. There are still a few among us today that can recall how the late President Cadman and the late President Cherry urged this people to preach the Gospel. The devil is certainly rampant today, and we must all remember that The Book of Mormon pronounces a woe upon those that are at ease in Zion. The phrase "not time yet" I think is a terrible malady which some . . . seem to be afflicted with. (*The Gospel News*, July 1952, p. 2)

Descendent of Tecumseh a Proponent of the Church

The dialogue revolving around the Church's missionary priorities has been going on since shortly after its inception. However, it became especially interesting in the decade of the 1950s when Walter Tecumseh Morgan, a direct descendent of the great Native American Chief, Tecumseh, weighed into the discussion as a strong proponent of a more visible presence of the Church amongst his people. In the early 1950s, an important forum for this dialogue was *The Gospel News*. We begin these series of articles with the one that introduced Mr. Morgan to the Church:

Walter Tecumseh Morgan—Cherokee Indian of the Five Nations Reservation in Oklahoma, present home in Youngstown, Ohio, graduate of Haskell Institute and the University of Chicago, member of The National Congress of American Indians, Indian Council for Indian Rights Association, and Tribal Council of the five Oklahoma tribes, visited our home [William H. Cadman] here in Monongahela on June 5th and 6th; and I will add that we considered ourselves much honored with the presence of the Hon. Gray Eagle. He is a direct descendant on

the maternal side of his family, of the famous General Tecumseh, who fell in battle in the Province of Ontario, Canada

Gray Eagle's English name is Morgan, of which I speak of him from now on. Mr. Morgan is a man of wide and varied experience. He served four years in the late war, holding a very responsible position. He was a "Flying Transport Engineer," and the planes under his jurisdiction had to have his okay before leaving the ground.

Brother D. Bucci of Youngstown accompanied Mr. Morgan to my home. They were here in time to eat supper with us, and we were up until midnight listening to Mr. Morgan tell us of the wonders of his life, both among white people and of his own race. His parents left the Reservation while young in life, and his father became a building contractor and became very well off. He is the youngest of a family of 15 children and all received a good education; two of his brothers are doctors. They are full-blooded Indians.

On Sunday morning, our visitors went to Sunday School and Church with us. Mr. Morgan addressed our School. . . . (*The Gospel News*, July 1948)

The letter, which actually led to the dialogue referred to above, was written to Brother Cadman and published in *The Gospel News* in the early 1950s. The following article, entitled "Everybody Take Notice," is provided below:

Dear Brother William: . . . I want to express my thoughts. . . . It is a matter of putting in our Church Treasury sufficient funds that if we cannot go ourselves, that others could go and carry the Restored Gospel more to our Lamanite People. While we have done some missionary work, the field is very large, and much work is yet to be done. I admire and agree with Brother Furnier's closing remarks at our October Conference, saying that "the seed had been planted, but he had not been entirely satisfied with the results. There is going to be a great work done among the remnant of the House of Israel, but it is going to take a greater effort than we are making, and also much self-denial to bring this work about."

Don't you agree that we have been lax in doing our duty more fully, making the Lamanites [Indian People] acquainted with the Restored Gospel? (I certainly do agree that we have been lax, and very lax too. William H. Cadman)

With finances we can send several of our good elders in the missionary field among the Indian People. And I am satisfied that our work and efforts would be blessed. That is our duty, and it should be uppermost in the minds of all our members of The Church of Jesus Christ. The following are my thoughts.

I suggest: Starting December 1, 1952, the members of the Church, not compulsory, but voluntarily—to those who are wage-earners . . . that they might set aside \$1 each week for a period of six months, or a total of \$25 each. Is this asking too much? Or maybe some would rather voluntarily send in what they can.

I sincerely believe that a great blessing is in store for all of us, when we more fully start our work among our Indian People, whether we are elders ministering, or whether we are the ones that cannot go.

We will be blessed because of the satisfaction that we have contributed to the progress of the work, which we believe and teach. "The whole need not a physician, but rather those that are sick. "I suggest a writing by you on this subject be put in *The Gospel News* for a period of six months. . . .

P.S. [William H. Cadman writes:] Instead of me writing on this matter as suggested by my brother, I am publishing his letter. It may have more effect than anything I might write. My old brethren know the past history of the Church on this question. In another column of this issue of *The Gospel News*, I have quoted the words of the deceased President William Cadman, "that Latter Day Saints have encouraged themselves in the covenants made to Israel instead of doing their duty towards them, that is, preaching the Gospel to Israel," I am afraid that the same condition has befallen us as a people today. It seems to be human nature, that instead of starting at the bottom of the ladder, we want to get on the top first. If the House of Israel and obedient Gentiles are to sit under their own vine and fig-tree some day; then whoever is the true Church of Jesus Christ must preach the Gospel to Israel, as well as anticipate the blessings of the future.

Remember brethren and sisters, we cannot expect to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize, and sailed through bloody seas. Do you really believe that God is still the same?

The above article inspired Walter Tecumseh Morgan to write the following (once again with Bro. Cadman's editorial comments included):

Editor: My very dear friend, I just finished reading the January issue of "*The Gospel News*." I enjoy every edition but this one more than any other. I am happy to know that those Indians from S. Dakota were your visitors. Having visited in your home myself, I know they were treated royally. This I wish to thank you for.

There are thousands of Indians in the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. They are known as the Northern Plains Indians. I assume those visiting you were Sioux. They have more than one Reservation. At one time they were the most handsome, proud, happy people that ever roamed the Northern plains. They are a God-fearing people and a great majority are in the Protestant Faith, greatly in need of proper teaching. There is not a people in the U.S. that has been treated as badly by their white brothers as they. The Church of Jesus Christ could do wonders for these people as well as the entire Indian population. I hope I have not been misunderstood when I have pleaded with all the members of your Conventions, the few times I have had the opportunity, that their main field lay in the Continental U.S.

I am happy to know of the wonderful work being done for my people in Canada, but I guess I am a little prejudice when I want you to center on those here at home. I know the way they have suffered and are still suffering. I know of the prejudices, the slurs, the enmity that still exists. I also know there is but one way out, and that is through the teaching of Jesus Christ, by the proper people, with but one thing in mind, the saving of souls. This brings me to the letter on page 2 (January, [*The*] *Gospel News*) under the heading "Everybody Take Notice." I most heartily agree with the writer, for I know just what the job will be. At times you will be called upon to assist the physical man, for in some districts there is still hunger and sickness. It is rather hard to try and preach to a hungry and sick people.

I don't know how I can be of any help, but if it is at all possible for me to assist in any way, please contact me. For the first time in my life I wish to help a people. Heretofore I have not had any use for missionaries, because I have seen the Hell too many of them brought with them. Knowing your people as I do, I know they will live a sermon as well as preach it. We know that the words of Wendell Phillips, spoken over a century ago, have been true, "The Indian race is the one which the people of the U.S. must dread at the Judgment Bar of Almighty God."

We can do nothing about the past for it is history. But we can do something about the present and the future. I pray God's blessing upon all of you in your great work, especially you and your lovely wife. That

you may be spared years to guide your good people in the way they should go.

It is indeed a pleasure to call all of you my friends. God be with you 'till we meet again. Very sincerely your friend, W. Tecumseh Morgan.

P.S. [Brother William H. Cadman writes:] Mr. Morgan is a Cherokee Indian from Oklahoma, now living in Youngstown, Ohio. It is true that we have not done much in behalf of his race, but I give God praise for the friendship thus far gained among His covenant people. And I imagine that if my old venerable father were here today, tears of joy would flow down his cheeks on receiving a letter like we have received from Tecumseh, a descendant of the famous general of the same name. I ask you all, and especially you older brethren. Are the covenant people of God knocking at our doors? Have we not slumbered long enough? And, are we ready to wake up? (*The Gospel News*, March 1953)

There have been many who recognized their day as “the time” and did, indeed, “go into the vineyard, laboring with all their might.” The spirit in which they went is common with any missionary who has ever toiled and struggled for the souls of others.

The Fulfillment of a Sacred Covenant

The Church learned early that The Book of Mormon reveals the fact that this land of America will not only be the place of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant to the Seed of Joseph of the House of Israel, but also the site for the New Jerusalem. The Jews will return to the land of their inheritance, Old Jerusalem, and the Natives of the Americas will build a New Jerusalem on this land, with the assistance of the Gentiles.

We have been using the term covenant often, but what does this term mean? It is evident that it was an extremely important concept, both in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, as well as The Book of Mormon. It is a solemn agreement between two parties, binding them mutually to commitments on each other's behalf. In theological terms, a covenant is a sacred agreement between God and man.

Jacob, the son of Lehi, refers to the covenants of the Lord with the House of Israel in II Nephi 9:1-3 as follows:

That ye may know concerning the covenants of the Lord that he has covenanted with all the house of Israel—that He has spoken unto the Jews, by the mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down, from generation to generation, until the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God; when they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise. Behold, my beloved brethren, I speak unto you these things that ye may rejoice.

THE MUNCEY MISSION

About 15 miles west of London, Ontario, Canada, lies a cluster of three small Indian reservations nestled together on gently rolling farmland. Historical records show that the Chippewa people established a settlement some time before 1820 along the Thames River. Known as the Chippewas of the Thames Band, they were officially recognized by the Canadian government in 1822, consisting of a population of 240 and a total of some 15,000 acres. Eventually, the acreage decreased to about half at 8,240 acres, yet the band population by the mid-1970s would more than double at around 600 living on and 600 living off the reservation. In the small hamlet of Muncey, which is off the reservation and nestled between the Chippewa and Oneida Reservations, the Church was established, and, thence, the work became known as the Muncey Mission.

The First Visit

Julia Nicholas, wife of George Nicholas, Chief of the Delaware Tribe, located in Muncey, Ontario, Canada, had begun her quest for religious truth sometime prior to October of 1932. Dissatisfied with the churches she had been associated with, she began to earnestly pray for the Lord's direction to a church containing His Spirit and Truth. As a young girl at the time, Faye Albert had watched her mother in this pursuit, and much

of what transpired regarding the introduction of the Gospel to her people was later recorded in her personal journal.

. . . [My Mother] was attending various religions on the Reserve. She couldn't find what she was looking for in any . . . This woman had no education whatsoever; hers was self-learned, but she was very intelligent and had a great understanding of the Bible.

Julia's husband, George, however, was a devout Anglican Church member, apparently quite satisfied with his faith.

In the year 1932, Brother William H. Cadman, was moved upon to pursue the dream of his father, taking his counsel that we as Gentiles must take the Gospel to the Seed of Joseph. Upon reading a newspaper published by the tribes living on the Muncey Reservation, he wrote to Chief Nicholas.

In the fall of 1932, Brothers Paul Love, Alma B. Cadman, Anthony DiBattista, and William H. Cadman visited with Chief George Nicholas and his wife after a series of letters had been exchanged between them.

Sister Faye Albert's account explains how the four brothers had originally planned to travel to the Six Nations Reservation near Brantford, Ontario to evangelize there. Another source corroborates this story, revealing that a correspondence had transpired between Brother Cadman and the Tuscarora Indians of New York and that both parties had planned to meet at the Six Nations Reserve.

Traveling on the Number 2 Highway, the brothers stopped at the small village of Melbourne, approximately 120 miles from Windsor. There, in a combination gas station-restaurant, they engaged in a discussion with a few of the locals regarding their whereabouts and the distance they needed yet to travel to Six Nations (about 100 miles). To their surprise, they were told of their close proximity to other Indian communities, and it was at that point the decision was made by the brothers to investigate.

As they reached their new destination, they stopped again to inquire from an Indian as to where they could find the Chief. The man replied

that there were three Chiefs, one for each of the Chippewa, Delaware, and Oneida Tribes. However, when the Indian was told of the nature of the trip, he directed the brothers to George Nicholas, Chief of the Delaware Indians, who was considered the more religious man.

They arrived finding a very humble dwelling consisting of two rooms on the main floor and an upstairs, which made for the living quarters of the Chief, his wife, three daughters and two sons. Having neither electricity nor running water, the only source of heat was provided by the wood stove by which they cooked their meals. Sister Faye remembers that first encounter:

. . . us all eating supper, and mom apologizing for things we didn't have, but these four brothers were genuinely pleased with the very good Indian bread my mother made, and whatever else she served them . . . These times were bad financially all over, but even worse on Muncey. Store-bought bread was a rare treat. . . We were very poor, but never hungry, as our parents provided, though meager, food mostly grown and canned from wild fruit. But we never felt poor because we knew love very abundantly. . . Even as a child that I was at this time, I can remember the goodness of those men that made them different.

Prayers were said and hymns were sung. Later on mom told me that the love of God these brothers showed had stirred in her heart an immediate yearning for everything this doctrine stood for.

They stayed in our home, ate at our table, and slept in our beds, never once showing they were missing comforts they were surely used to, but on the contrary they were very much at home.

Julia's search for a church was over. She would hold fast from that day onward her belief that the brothers had been directed to her home by Divine Providence. Sister Faye:

. . . (She) always said she didn't have long to wait. When the brothers came, in a way, she was waiting for them, and immediately felt her prayers were answered.

The very next day, a very excited Julia Nicholas began taking the brothers to the Reserve to those whom she thought would be interested

in hearing this "new Gospel." Visiting the homes of friends and relatives, Brother Cadman set about explaining the beliefs of the Church. Brother Anthony DiBattista continues:

[Chief George Nicholas] also helped us to get the council hall to have services in the evening. We remained there, holding a meeting every night. The second day, I saw the Spirit of God move upon Sister Nicholas and the next day (on October 4, 1932) Brother William Cadman baptized her. The same evening we held another meeting, I saw the Spirit move on Brother John and Sister Phoebe Hall. They were also baptized by Brother William Cadman. We then left to return to Pennsylvania with the understanding to visit them again. Brother Alma Cadman and I returned there and I baptized Sister Alice Snake. Brother Alma took sick and we had to come home; while we were there the Lord surely blessed us and gave us a good experience through His Son Jesus Christ.

Sister Faye Albert:

This was not (a) chance meeting. This was the plan of God . . . I often think and glorify God's power in realizing what a great impact these brothers had to have made, because this was 1932, a time when prejudice was very [prevalent]. The only non-Indians on the Reserve were schoolteachers, one doctor, an Indian agent, and ministers of various denominations, with very little fraternization. Poverty was something we all lived with. To tell our younger ones today is like telling fiction stories, but it



Julia Nicholas,
John and Phoebe Hall

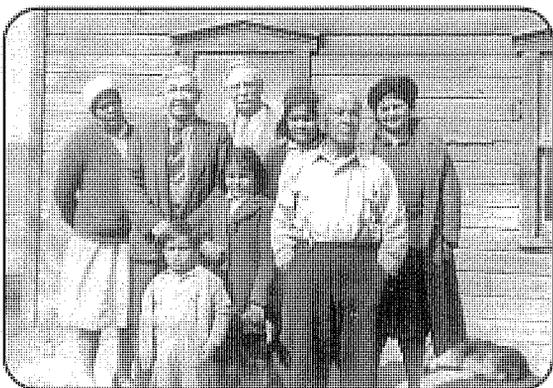


Lucy and Eli Snake

was very real to us; just another example to prove God's love came with these saints of His. They [Brothers William H. Cadman, *et al*] were not above sharing my parents' meager fare, but were so very thankful to be welcomed. Much talking and explaining took place. Mom gathered together her relatives and neighbors who were interested in spiritual things

.....
 [The Book of Mormon] was unheard of, at least to my father and mother. They did not accept everything that came along without making very sure. It seemed as though every religion known in this land had attempted to bring Christianity to the Indian people. So you can see why most Indian people were very suspicious of all Gentiles, known to us as "White man."

The Lord, though, had been in the matter, and the Church's efforts to proselytize the Indians would eventually come to fruition. However, as Brother Matthew Miller wrote, it would be two years "of prayer, fasting, and a great struggle from



William H. Cadman at the DeLeary's Home

many sources" before more converts came into the Church, "there being much opposition from the devil and his host." These later converts were Brother Amos and Sister Annie DeLeary and Brother Isaac and Sister Maggie French, along with their daughter, Sister Jane Dolson, who was instrumental in taking the Gospel to the Six Nations Reserve.

The Muncey work had been turned over by the General Church to the Detroit Branch, (Brother Thurman Furnier was presiding elder at the time) just after the initial visit was made. For two years, the saints met in the homes of the new converts until they were able to secure the council hall on a temporary basis for their Sunday Services. Various brothers had a hand in the early administration and support of the work, such as Apostles

Thurman Furnier, John Penn, Charles Ashton, John Ward, and Joseph Dulisse, and Evangelists Matthew Miller and Mark Randy. Moreover, Brother William H. Cadman remained an active supporter. In visiting Elizabeth Seneca's home, be-



The French Family

cause of the language barrier, he very patiently and painstakingly repeated over and over again details of the doctrine as Sister Julia translated his words into the Chippewa tongue. This method of evangelism proved successful again a few years later for an aged Indian woman, Mrs. Brant. Known also as Tadocqueenaw, she lived to be over 100 years old. (Cadman History, p. 324 and Sister Faye Albert's Journal.)

Brother Mark Randy's Testimony

Trips to Muncey from Detroit, Michigan were taken every Sunday. The few who owned cars volunteered to provide transportation to the new mission. . . . I lost no time in volunteering my Model A Ford. But I did not have a spare tire, and my tires were well worn out.

. . . I became concerned about the wisdom of my volunteering a vehicle unable to perform. My brother, Michael, came home from school full of enthusiasm. "I found a tire that fits your wheel," he said. The former owner had thrown it into the alley because it had a hole big enough to put a fist through, but Michael also found another tire from which we cut parts, placing them inside the old tire and adding an old patched inner tube. Then we prayed that we would make it the whole trip, one hundred and twenty miles and back.

"Enthusiasm seems to have a great capacity." That night I dreamed a man spoke to me saying, "Marco, I am going to lead you and show you the way." We proceeded together; he was showing me every turn and

road I was to cross until we finally reached a log cabin. There stood a tall Indian man and woman. My guide said, "This woman is baptized; her husband is not. Here is where you will hold the meeting."

I woke up; it was time for me to rise. I proceeded to pick up Thurman Furnier, Matthew Miller, and Charles Wesley. I told them my dream, then said, "Please do not guide me unless I make a mistake; I must follow what the guide taught me in my dream." My riders were amazed at the way I knew every turn. They thought I actually had been there before! I had never been to Canada, much less in Muncey. I believed that the Lord was preparing me for my future missionary endeavor.

Upon arrival, George Nicholas stood by the door of the log cabin, his wife Julia by his side. I introduced myself, then said, "Why are you not baptized?" He kind of tried to smile but said, "I will, I will." Little did I know that one day I would be pastor of the Muncey Mission.

As it turned out, it was not Muncey, but at the branch in Detroit on Hall and Devine, during the April Conference of 1934, where George Nicholas was moved upon to ask for his baptism. Sister Faye continues:

The Indian members were brought to many conferences. This effort proved to be very worthwhile. It not only helped them understand more of the Church, it gave spiritual uplifting, and the Love of God was felt between the Indian people and the Gentiles. To get to go to Conference for us children was like something out of this world. At the time I only felt happiness because it was something different, but as I grew up I realized how important it was. . . . April Conference, 1934, was a time mom had been praying for. My father, George Nicholas, asked for his baptism. His conversion was so complete, he was so filled with the Spirit of God, he was assisted to the waters, as he could hardly walk.

This made much difference in our home; it was now united Prayer was now offered together as a united family . . . The Holy Bible and The Book of Mormon had now entered my Dad's life night after night I can still picture my parents sitting at the table studying . . . together, and many times other Church members or friends would be there.

A year later on May 19, 1935, Brother George was ordained a teacher of the Church. By now, serious discussions arose concerning the possi-

bility of having a resident minister at the Mission. This matter was talked about at length in the January 1936 General Church Conference but to no avail. President Cadman was provoked to comment:

It does seem strange that after all our years of existence, and it seems so much more strange in view of our profession relative to carrying the Gospel to the Redman, that we as a Church are so slow in performing our duty in this respect, yet we talk so much about the matter. (*The Gospel News*, July 1976, p. 2; Detroit Branch #1 Elders and Teachers Meeting Minutes.)

Within four years, the Mission got its resident elder—not a Gentile, but one of its own. Brother George Nicholas was ordained a minister in October of 1939.

Once I Was Blind

As with many evangelistic works in their early stages, miracles marked the beginning of the Muncey work. And, perhaps, more so than other people, the Native Americans have long stood in the greatest need of miracles—suffering the more troublesome ills of society, and being all too well acquainted with hardship and grief. Those who accepted the Gospel witnessed the matchless Power of the Lord in dealing with their trials. Brother Mark Randy:

Miracles were real as the love for one another was real. There was an old blind woman who would attend regularly. Her name was Elizabeth Muskellunge. Her nephew, Angus DeLeary, was bringing her to Church every Sunday.

One Sunday (circa 1936), she requested to be baptized. Brother Matthew Miller, who was in charge at that time, performed the baptism. As our new sister was immersed into the waters of the Thames River and began to come out of the water, Brother Miller wiped the water from her face with his hand. Suddenly Sister Elizabeth shouted, "I see a hand!" We, who were witnessing this baptism, were shocked and amazed as we watched her running out of the water, her eyes wide open. "I can see! I can see!" she repeated. She was dancing for joy. There were tears of joy, and songs of praise filled the air.

The news spread fast. Sister Muskellunge had been blind for 16 years. Some were doubtful at the phenomenon, but some praised God. Many came to visit her, considering what had happened a miracle. Others only thought of it as a coincidence or a temporary situation, but Sister Elizabeth could see well enough to thread a needle. Several baptisms resulted from this conversional miracle. (*The Gospel News, March 1986, p. 2*)

Shortly after this incident, Brother Mark was ordained an elder, at 23 years of age, and began making more regular trips to Muncey. Brother Mark continues:

One of the first living miracles was that of Sister Phoebe Hall. All her children died of tuberculosis. She was also afflicted with this contagious disease. She was a deaconess in the Church. The poor Indians were naturally concerned about taking Sacrament. Matthew Miller was the senior elder; I had been ordained only a short time. It was our lot to go into the home of this dying Sister to tell her that she could no longer keep the Sacrament linens. Matthew said to me, "Marco, you tell her." I just couldn't; neither could he. Sister Phoebe said, "I know why you are here. Tell the dear Church people I have not touched the linens ever since I became ill. My sister has been caring for and cleaning them. I know that I am dying. Please let me continue to come to Church; I will be the last to come in and the first going out so they do not have to come near me." She would lay on a bench near the door. It was heartbreaking for me to think that I have the power to heal people and yet I stand helpless and have to see my sister die, her family already gone. How could I claim to have power and witness a poor, helpless person suffer so? At Church, I watched her cough and spit blood into a can, which she brought from home. If ever I wrestled in prayer on behalf of anyone, it was now.

. . . Matthew Miller spoke, then gave testimony, but my mind was on this dying woman. At the closing, Brother Matthew said, 'Marco, aren't you going to say something before we close?'

"Yes, I am going to pray for Phoebe." To my surprise, Julia Nicholas and Alice Snake stood and went to help Phoebe sit up. I anointed her and pleaded for God to have compassion on this, one of His children.

Sister Phoebe stood up and said, "I feel strength." She had been taken to Church in a horse and buggy, but she insisted on walking home. We all walked with her, singing joyfully. What a day that was!

Sister Phoebe eventually regained her full health and lived a productive life until her passing at the age of 87.

By Trials of Faith Strength Was Gained

When, in January of 1937, Frank Ford and Clifford Burgess attended their first service at the Muncey Mission, they were struck by the simple faith of a small humble group of Indian brothers and sisters. By this faith, miracles were experienced, and in this faith, strength was gained—strength to resist the temptations common to the Reserve, as well as to stand in the face of opposition. Sister Faye explains:

Speaking of hardships and stumbling blocks, the evil spirit made sure there were many, not only physical but spiritual as well.

One of the sons of an Indian Sister, who happened to be a devout member of another faith, instigated his share of trials. Sister Faye:

. . . One day as we were having service in the Muncey Council Hall, he burst in with a Mountie (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and interrupted a meeting Brother Miller and Brother Wade Rikken were holding.

When my Dad asked for an explanation of this, the constable very reluctantly told him a complaint had been laid and it was his duty to carry it through, and therefore, telling our elders that they'd been breaking a law of trespassing and if they insisted on continuing to do so they would be arrested. According to The Indian Act, no white person or "Gentile" could be on the Reserve after sundown, so ending one of the few comforts the elders sometimes enjoyed. They were very cautious not to violate this law, while striving to establish a Mission here. Later, this law was to become lax and once again some of our elders enjoyed the hospitality our Indian people gave them in their homes.

Other religions on the Reserve rivaled for members and resorted to sowing seeds of distrust and disbelief throughout the Reserve, especially regarding the validity of The Book of Mormon. Opposition once came from a doctor, who on a bitterly cold winter day witnessed an Indian woman's slippers freeze to the ice as she approached the hole in which she

would be submerged for baptism. He severely threatened to bring an end to winter baptisms if this woman suffered any ill effects from the cold. She did not, nor has any candidate since then. Needless to say, he was no match for the Power of God.

The Children

In 1938, when Brother Mark Randy assumed full responsibility of the Mission, his attention quickly focused on the Mission's children, whose bubbly faces often masked their needs. Brother Mark:

I was not completely aware of the plight of our Indian children until I assumed that caring position of . . . pastor. The parent would come to me with their problems; their poverty was the greatest poverty in the country. Their children had very poor self-esteem; their attitude was, "I am just an Indian; who cares?" This attitude was shared by their parents. I spent more time with the children, reassuring them that they were great, and more so because they needed to face the bright future by working harder in school. They responded with child-like love. Their children's choir became the joy of everyone. . . . There was such a spirit of confidence that coming to Church became something to look forward to.

"Brother Marco, Baptize Me"

Mary Skylar, wife of Brother George Cornelius, a deacon in the mission, had been paralyzed for eight years.

Brother Mark recalls:

After Church, we went to her home; several Church members came along. When I saw the frail form of about ninety pounds, I felt that the same God who could raise Jesus from the dead could also raise this frail form. Instead of anointing her, I proceeded to read from the eighth chapter of Romans. As I was reading she said, "Brother Marco, baptize me."

Her request took Brother Mark by surprise, especially because she didn't know many particulars about the Faith of our Church and also because the water in the Thames River was very frigid at this time of the

year. However, she persisted in her request, stating that as Brother Mark was reading the scriptures, a heavenly messenger was standing along side of him telling her to ask him to baptize her because she did not have much time to live. He told her to make herself ready to enter paradise.

Although Brother Mark did not see the heavenly messenger, he believed Mary's words. On the following Sunday, there were approximately 200 people who came from the Detroit and Windsor Branches to witness this baptism. It was truly a miracle to see Mary Skylar walk into the Church building, and as she walked into the frigid waters, she was overwhelmed with thanksgiving. She proceeded to raise her arms toward heaven, and then she offered a prayer in her native Oneida tongue. This truly was an experience not soon forgotten.

Visitation of Angels

Brother Mark said there was a continuation of angelic visitations in Muncey. He further states that on one particular Sunday, he awakened with a very high fever, and he tried to find someone to take his place in Muncey but to no avail. He then decided to travel to Muncey even though he was very sick. As he was speaking during the meeting, Sister Nicholas suddenly arose to her feet and exclaimed that she saw a man standing on the right side of Brother Mark. Sister Snake also arose and was able to describe the visitor's appearance. Brother Mark turned towards the place where this person stood and said, "I see you not, but if you truly be an Angel of God, bless me that I may be able to serve God better." At that very moment, the Spirit of the Lord consumed him and the fever left him. (*The Gospel News*, August 1982, p. 5)

Ordination of the First Indian Minister in the Church

Upon his ordination on October 15, 1939 into the ministry, Brother George Nicholas relinquished his duties as Tribal Chief, believing that he could not truly administer the duties of an elder and also be in public service. He decided to spend his remaining years, along with his wife Julia, serving the spiritual needs of his people. Sister Faye Albert states:

They were not too old yet, and together they really worked, holding meetings and telling anyone who would listen about this wonderful Gospel they had found. There were fruits of his labor; dad was given the wonderful gift of anointing people, and the Lord listened to his prayers, and many found comfort and ease after he prayed for them. . .

Brother Nicholas had the gift of prayer and was blessed of God in anointing people; such was the case when Brother Edmund Seneca became ill and walked to the home of Brother Nicholas to be anointed during one of the coldest winter nights of 1947. Upon arriving at the Nicholas' home, he discovered that his feet were white with frost and through prayer and the prevailing grace of God he was healed.

In a similar incident, a distraught parent cradled his ill child within his arms as he walked during the night to the Nicholas' home. In asking Brother George to anoint the child, the Indian father had displayed great faith in his ministry in that the father had simply heard of the Church through the testimony of one of the members. His faith was rewarded with a healing upon his child. Brother Mark Randy remembers:

Brother Nicholas had a very unique character. His word was his bond, his friendship true, and his convictions the highest. The compassion for the hardship of his people was very real in his heart. . . When Brother George and I were alone, he would confide the needs for education for his people. Though there were schools in Muncey, most children did not go very far with their education, and the opportunities for them were very limited.

We, as a Church, were unprepared to help much at that time. We prayed together as father and son for the poor of the area. There was much sickness in the winters. There was much poor housing, inadequate clothing and food, and limited heat for the hard winters. Sometimes we wondered how they survived, and some did not survive, especially the children.

Often we prayed for the sick, anointing them with oil as the Bible teaches. We cried to God with much compassion. Many were miraculously healed. Even those who did not belong to the Church came to be anointed, and they were healed. I could feel the love that Brother George had for his people. Often he would point out to me the needs of the destitute and the sick. . .

There was very little that Brother Nicholas could do for his poor people, since the Indian agent had the overseeing rule over them. . .

The most inspiring sermon that Elder Nicholas preached was from Isaiah 29. As he would pick up The Book of Mormon, he would say, "This is the voice that speaks from the dust to us and our children. Some day our people will hear this voice of hope, this voice of promise." I would watch him and feel the deep conviction of his heart. (*The Gospel News*, March 1983, p. 1)

Doubting The Book of Mormon

Sister Julia was Brother George's faithful spiritual helpmate. Abundantly blessed, she had the gifts of visions and the singing, speaking, and interpretation of tongues, but, moreover, a heart of gold. At a particular time in her life, she became somewhat discouraged and tempted to doubt The Book of Mormon. However, she had a vision in which she saw three of the ministers who had pioneered the work in Muncey, namely Brothers William H. Cadman, Thurman Furnier, and Matthew Miller. It appeared as if they were walking through a mist and as they walked a voice spoke saying, "Doubt no more, these are my faithful servants in whom I am well pleased."

Construction of a Church Building in Muncey

In 1938, the Council Hall, which had been used previously for Sunday morning services, was converted into a school. This forced the members to hold meetings in their homes. Brother George Nicholas then wrote to the President of our Church, William H. Cadman, expressing his concern that the work at Muncey would suffer because of a lack of a church building.

Despite the many obstacles, the membership was continuing to grow, and they all felt the necessity to have a Church building of their own to meet in. On September 11, 1939, a discussion was held at Branch #1 in Detroit, Michigan, concerning the need for a church building in Muncey.

With Brother Nicholas' assistance, a lot was found, and subsequently purchased; and, at the October 1939 General Church Conference, approval to begin construction was granted. A motion was also passed,

during this conference, that all members of the General Church be asked to donate \$1 within 30 days to help pay for the construction of this building.

The foundation was started on October 25th. Many brothers worked very hard to erect this building, and in six months it was finished, debt-free. It was dedicated on April 28, 1940.

It is interesting to note that the Church also was equipped with small living quarters including a bedroom and kitchen. Brother Mark states that he used the living quarters many times and recollects one time when he and Brother Cadman held meetings every night for 19 consecutive days.

Established Mission Status

Reflecting the Mission's continued success, at the General Church Conference of July 1940, Muncey was organized into an Established Mission, under Detroit, Branch #1, with Brother Wade Rigger the presiding elder. It was also recognized that Brothers George Nicholas and Thomas Anderson, both Native American ministers, would no doubt be a great help in the work among their people. (Cadman History, p. 334)



Thomas Anderson and Family

The Hillcrest Farm

The topic of the Church's purchasing a farm in the Muncey area had provoked much discussion during the April 1944 General Church Conference. In December of 1943, each Branch and Mission throughout the Church received a letter from Brother Cadman outlining the proposition to purchase the farm with the intent to "do something toward the liberation of our Indian brothers and sisters, both temporally and spiritually." The priesthood had come to the April Conference prepared to make a decision.

A lively debate ensued on the Conference floor with many finding the need to give their opinions for or against the purchase. Suddenly, while Brother Cadman was speaking of the "hardships" and "privations" of the Indian people, Brother Thurman Furnier arose to his feet and powerfully charged, "Someone must do something!" Immediately, a sister declared that the Lord had revealed to her that Brother Cadman had "spoken the truth in his remarks."

Sensing the Lord's presence in this matter, the assembly sang the Hymn, "God Moves In A Mysterious Way," and Brother Furnier petitioned the Lord for divine guidance. A motion was made that President Cadman be authorized to solicit funds for the purchasing of this property, with a unanimous vote following in favor of the action. The ministry had solidly backed the purchasing of the property for \$6,000. (*General Church Conference Minutes*, April 1944)

The farmland on the Reserve had been idle for years. Sister Faye explained the agricultural condition of the decade, which followed the Depression:

The people of Muncey were very poor, it was difficult to acquire food. How could they even hope to obtain machinery to farm or horses, which at the time were necessary. Land on the Reserve could not be used as collateral, therefore, no bank would give a loan; and to this day this is in effect making it very difficult to get a start.

With the acquisition of the farm, the Church had set its goals high. The hope was to utilize the farm, both as a residence for missionaries to service the Mission and to introduce modern farming techniques to the Indians. Ultimately, the Church felt the Indians could be self-sufficient in their spiritual and temporal lives. It was an exciting time for the Church as many eyes focused on this innovative "farm" concept. This created a need for missionaries who possessed farming skills, as well as a love for the people and a commitment to this type of work among the Seed of Joseph.

Having resigned his post with the Canadian Department of Selective Service on October 1, 1944 (after having worked 15 years prior in the Department of Immigrations), Brother Frank Ford and his wife, Leata, became the first resident missionaries. They were joined in January by Apostle Jim Cowan (also retired) and his bride of just a few months, Sister Clara. High hopes were expressed by both families in a January 1945 letter to Brother William Cadman:

The meetings at our Church have been well attended considering the weather. Last Sunday, there were 15 Indian children at Sunday School, and quite a number of adults attended the preaching meeting Sunday afternoon. Quite a few Indian men from the other side of the river have started to attend the services.

Brother Ford, seeing the talent of the Indian men in singing, has decided to hold a singing service on Friday evenings of each week, and we will be getting our M.B.A. going in the near future and also the Ladies' Uplift Circle. . . As soon as the weather will permit, we expect to start a systematic visiting program of the Indian homes on all the reservations. We feel there is a good work for us here in this missionary field, since we are located here and will be able to personally look after it continually.

Recognizing the need to lift the spirits of the Indians, the Brothers were anxious to get started on the farming project. They further expressed:

These Indian people seem to be discouraged, feeling that their case is hopeless, with very little confidence in the white man; but our task

will be to show them that God has not forgotten them if they will become a righteous people again like they once were before they dwindled in unbelief. We believe that our work consists of teaching and preaching the Restored Gospel to them, both in word and in actions, teaching them the advantages of tilling the soil in a scientific manner with modern equipment and prove by actual experience and example how to plant and utilize their land, which at present is lying idle to a great extent, growing up in briars and weeds instead of productive fields of grain, fruit and vegetables.

This is a choice land above all other lands, and God has provided . . . [We] have plenty to eat and wear. We believe that God will bless us in proportion to our ambition and effort.

And, in a true salesman-like pitch, the need for financial support was made:

. . . Every member in the Church today will have the privilege of helping to equip the farm with machinery and stock, which will only take a year at one dollar per quarter for each member. Then the Church will have a self-supporting missionary project on the border of the Lamanites. The possibilities of this project will be unlimited in encouraging, teaching and inspiring our Indian brothers and sisters to help themselves, both temporally and spiritually. (*The Gospel News*, March 1945, p. 2; July 1945, p. 2; and August 1945, p. 1)

For the winter of 1945, the effect of the new missionaries was immediately felt. Although the time was at the end of the war, when nearly everything was rationed and conveniences and luxuries were literally nonexistent, the Mission basked in a joy—a joy found in a hope brought to it by the Fords and Cowans. Sister Faye Albert tells of the simple joys, long to be remembered and appreciated, such as Brother Frank's picking up saints in a horse-drawn sleigh on a winter's eve for a Church meeting at one of the homes; lanterns hung from the sides of the wagon for light on the sleigh-rutted roads. And, as the saints wound their way through the bushes and woods, the singing of the old hymns, "There's a Better Day," "Pull For the Shore," and "O Stop and Tell Me, Redman," trumpeted the call for every listening ear of the joy and glory of the Restored

Gospel. By summer, Brother Cowan had driven the farm tractor from Windsor all the way to Muncey (about 100 miles). At 69 years of age, this apostle reflected the youthful spirit of a pioneer of the Gospel.

Branch Status Organized in March 1945

With a bright future for the work at Muncey, the Mission was organized into a Branch of the Church in March of 1945. Brother Cowan was elected as the presiding elder and Brothers Ford and Nicholas were his first and second counselors, respectively.

Brother Frank Ford Passes On

The work in Muncey received a setback with the passing of Brother Frank Ford during the summer of 1945. Brother Ford was born in the town of Meaford, Ontario, Canada on February 4, 1897. He enlisted in World War I and was wounded by shrapnel but was not brought home until after the Armistice was signed. On May 24, 1921, he married Mary Aleata Henderson, and from this union, a son, Jack Bernard Ford, was born, who later became a minister in the Church. At the time of his death, he held the office of an evangelist.

Brother Ford felt that the Indian people were instrumental in his finding the salvation of his soul, and he desired to share his lot and portion with them and strived to do his uttermost to help them from their fallen state.

Brother James C. Cowan Passes On

Not more than a month later, Brother Cowan also passed away. Brother Cadman remembers him with these words:

Brother Cowan . . . who worked alongside Brother Ford on the Muncey Farm, . . . died on July 20, 1945, as he was working in the hay field. He had just attended the General Church Conference in Monongahela and was very hopeful about his labors among the Indian people at Muncey. The last time I visited with him at the Muncey Farm, he told me that he was perfectly satisfied and contented living on the farm,



James Cowan (center) with some of his children: including Dorothy Gandley-Shaeffer, Ralph Cowan, Ellis Cowan, Mary Gavaghan, Amanda Byers, Ruth Kirschner, Martha Belle Seighman, and Peg (Mellinger) Johnson (Lloyd Cowan and Harriet Byers are not pictured)

and that he wanted to spend the rest of his days there, which he did. I felt very sorry with the passing away of Brother Cowan. Though there are things happening that we cannot understand, yet I always want to feel that God doeth all things well, and we should cheerfully submit to His Will.

The deaths of Brothers Ford and Cowan put this new project at a standstill. Although missionaries continued to travel from Detroit to Muncey on the weekends, it was very apparent that the Mission would need someone to manage the farm as well as to take care of the congregation. Brother Cadman expressed to the General Church the great need to fill the vacancies created by their deaths.

In the January 1946 General Church Conference, a board of five brothers was elected to handle all the affairs at the Muncey Farm for one year, namely, William H. Cadman, Dominic Cotellesse, Clifford Burgess, Allen Henderson, and George Nicholas, with Brother Cadman as chairman. Finally, in the spring, a permanent missionary replacement was

obtained with the appointment of Brother Dominic Cotellesse. He and his wife, Sister Julia, and their four children occupied the farmhouse. The status of the work was changed from a Branch back to a Mission, but by summer, an encouraged President Cadman reported:

On our farm, we are gathering quite a lot of stock; we have 33 head of cattle, about 40 head of sheep and lambs, lots of chickens, pigs, a good team of horses and lots of good pasture, and our grain is about all planted. Brother Cotellesse is very busy holding meetings and visiting where he is needed.

Brother Matthew Miller concurred,

As far as we could see, Brother Cotellesse and his family are in good shape and seem to be doing a masterful job both on the farm and in working hard to build up the spiritual outlook among the Seed of Joseph. (*The Gospel News*, June 1946, p. 3,7)



left to right: Matthew Miller, Julie and Dominic Cotellesse on the Muncey Reserve

The Cotellesse Family

“Hear the cries from the front lines, send help badly needed,” calls out the *Song of Zion*. In this spirit, the Mission’s biggest advocate, Brother Will, pleaded for more assistance:

I do not expect The Church of Jesus Christ to triumph on flowery beds of ease. They did not in time past, neither will they today, or in this dispensation of time. Brother Cotellesse, along with his family, left their home in Detroit, including a lucrative business, and are spending their time at Muncey, laboring among the Indian people, at the same time doing what he can to get our farm on a paying basis. . . Won't all the members of this Church spare me one dollar each, every three months to help the work along? (*The Gospel News*, May 1947, p. 4)

Life as missionaries on the farm took its toll on the Cotellesse family. During their stay, Sister Julie had been given the added responsibility of a deaconess. And, if that wasn't enough, little Joseph, born to her on December 1, 1946, was added to the four children already in the family. Church services were held at the mission all day on Sundays and on Thursday evenings. On Wednesday evenings, Brother Dominic traveled over 20 miles, one way, to London, where services were held at Sister Skylar's home. Again, on Fridays, he traveled to Mount Brydges, located near London, to hold services there. Brother Dominic looked to his oldest son, Daniel, for assistance on the farm. Not even in his teens, Daniel could be found on top of the tractor and handling other chores typically done by adult men. (*The Gospel News*, June 1946, p. 7)

Missionary life, in general, is demanding. The many hardships and sacrifices imposed upon the missionaries and their families, the long days, the inopportune calls, and the setbacks are greatly taxing. Add to that the full-time responsibilities of the farm, and the hurdles can be insurmountable, if not for the Lord. Sister Faye Albert:

This farm was beautiful to look upon, but to live and get your living from it was a great challenge, especially for the city folk, unaccustomed to outside plumbing and wood stoves. Brother Dominic and Sister Julie adapted themselves very well, at least to our eyes; very probably it was much harder on them than we realized. I recall how Brother Dominic virtually ran a cab, as he was called upon many times, taking people about so obligingly. Many times this brother walked when roads were bad to the bedside of the sick and dying.

In the missionary's life, every blessing is cherished. A reprint of an article taken from *The London Free Press* is found in the February 1947 issue of *The Gospel News*.

Londoners never fail to hear with interest about the feats of their oldest citizen, John Sprague, who just last week reached his 107th birthday.

From this amazing centenarian's minister, comes the latest report indicating his imperviousness to hardship, accident, or the elements. John Sprague was baptized in the Thames River at the age of 100.

D. D. Cotellesse, minister of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Restoration of the Gospel, at Muncey, described the baptism of Mr. Sprague after reading about his birthday celebration in *The Free Press*.

"It was seven years ago, when Mr. Sprague was only a hundred," said Mr. Cotellesse. The ceremony was performed in April (when the Thames would still be plenty chilly for most folks) by George Nicholas, an elder of the Church.

Although Mr. Sprague was born in Ireland, he married an Indian and takes a keen interest in the affairs of the Church in Muncey. . . According to Mr. Cotellesse, Mr. Sprague, since his baptism, "admits to a greater religious experience in the years following his 100th birthday than during the century before."

After two years, the Cotellesse family had fulfilled their duties on the Mission and returned home to Lincoln Park, Michigan, transferring their membership back to Detroit, Branch #2.

A Shift in Approach

Beginning in 1949, the Mission remained, for the most part, under the leadership of elders from Branch #2 for a period of about 30 years. However, the farm was never used again for its intended purpose of developing farming among the Indians. Rather, at this time, Brother John Romano and his wife, Sister Alice, would serve the Mission by commuting from Detroit on weekends, often staying in the Church apartment overnight.

The year of 1949 was also the year that the Mission's aged Sister Muskellunge died at her humble home, where she had lived so many years on the Muncey Reserve. She had lived to the age of 109.



Rose and Joe Milantoni, Mary Cotellesse,
Agnes and Frank Bono, Jim Cotellesse,
Cliff Burgess, Robert A. Watson,
Alice George, Herman Kennedy

By 1950, Brother Romano introduced two young brothers to the Muncey work. In time, Brother Joe Milantoni would be remembered, arguably, as the Mission's greatest influence. This would also be the first experience among the Seed of Joseph for a future president of the Church, Brother John's son-in-law, Brother Dominic Thomas. Their enthusiasm and desires are evident in an article they wrote for *The Gospel News*:

Whereas in the past we have visited Muncey on Sundays, we are attempting to spend more time there, and so, have spent a few weekends with our wives along with us. Our activities have consisted of visiting among our Indian Brothers and Sisters, holding a few meetings on Saturdays and visiting homes of people who are not members of the Church. Our goals have been to encourage our people, interest others, children as well as adults, in the Restored Gospel.

We feel that God has blessed us in our efforts, and we hope as time passes by, we will become more proficient in working for the Lord. His blessings have been in this wise, that He has comforted, given courage when it was lacking, has heeded our prayers in behalf of the afflicted, and further, has blessed us with many visits by brothers and sisters from various parts of the Church. . . . (*The Gospel News*, August 1951, p. 8)

Their efforts, as well, certainly caught the attention of an ever-observant President Cadman. Regarding the used ambulance that Brother Dominic Moraco came across (as an employee of Lincoln Motors),

Brother Will explained with obvious delight that Brothers Milantoni and Thomas:

... have worked hard to pay for it (\$900), gathering waste paper and selling it, and from what they told me, they are doing well.

They gather up all who want to come to the meetings and see to it that they get home again. I am glad to see that spirit with my brethren, for the prophets did not only predict the return of Israel back to the fold again, but said that Gentiles would become "nursing fathers and mothers to Israel." The great and strange work of the last days is being fulfilled, is it not? (*The Gospel News*, October 1951, p. 3)

In the large picture, Brother Will's foretelling, "Surely God will bless their efforts," could not have been more accurate.

Many saints had a hand in the development of the Muncey Mission including the efforts of Brother Anthony Brutz along with his wife, Sister Grace, during the mid 1950s. When the new Michigan-Ontario District was formed in May of 1959, the Mission was under the direction of Brother Reno Bologna, who had been laboring there four and a half years prior. Brother Frank Morle had assisted Brother Reno for two years as a Sunday School teacher and driver. Eventually, Brother Bologna asked to be relieved of his duties and retired from the Mission in June of 1959.

The District was pressed again for qualified help to run the Mission. Two able brothers responded, John Buffa and Anthony Gerace, but only for the interim until more volunteers could be found from the ranks of the elders to replace them. In April of 1960, the newly created Mission Board took over the administration of Muncey, utilizing the Branch ministries, but again, only on a temporary basis until a permanent missionary could be established. This would not be until the summer of 1962, when Brother Joseph Milantoni assumed full responsibility of the Mission.

Experience of Sister Fisher

Brother Tony Scolaro tells of a Sister Fisher from the Muncey Reservation who was 90 years old. She lived all alone in a cabin that was 150 years old. She said that on February 16th, it was 10 degrees below zero and she was all alone.

Her water pump was frozen and she didn't have any water. Her fire was dying out and she didn't have any more wood in her house to put in the stove. Outside there was a terrible blizzard, along with high winds and snow. Sister Fisher got down on her knees to pray to God and about one-half an hour later, a knock came to her door and to her amazement, it was a young Indian boy who lived quite a distance away from her. He had braved the storm and walked through knee-deep snow to see if he could help her. She told the boy that he was an answer to prayer. He then brought in wood for her stove and got the fire started again before he left.

THE SIX NATIONS RESERVE (GRAND RIVER)

The Six Nations Reserve, located near the City of Brantford, Ontario, is approximately 72 square miles in size and is the home of approximately 9,800 Indians, representing the Confederation of Six Iroquois Nations: Mohawks, Cayugas, Onondagas, Tuscaroras, Oneidas, and Senecas. Some of the Delaware Indians also live there, although they are not members of the Six Nations. It remains the most populous Reserve in Canada.

Following the American Revolution in 1784, Joseph Brant, a prominent Mohawk War Chief and British Ally, led some 1,843 Iroquois Loyalists from New York State to the land granted to them in Ontario by Sir Frederick Haldimand as restitution for their losses in the War. The original tract, an estimated 675,000 acres (1,054 square miles), lay six miles deep on each side of the Grand River from its mouth to its source. (Sally Weaver, *Six Nations of the Grand River*, 1976)

Origin of the Six Nations Mission

It appears that a number of the Restoration Churches attempted to proselytize the Indians who were living on the Six Nations Reservation, including a Mohawk Indian lady by the name of Charlotte Hill (of the Turtle Clan), who was married to Fred Hill. Some time prior to 1937, two young Mormon elders visited the Hill home to witness to her of

their faith, including The Book of Mormon. Fred Hill was out farming at the time of their visit, but eventually he met the elders and had an opportunity to speak to them. Charlotte became somewhat troubled because of the daily visits to her home by the missionaries. Her troubled mind was such that she was unable to understand and enjoy the message contained in The Book of Mormon. She conveyed her feelings about the Mormon elders to her husband, and Brother Fred promised her that he would request that they refrain from visiting their home.

This exposure to the Restoration and The Book of Mormon, however, caused Fred and Charlotte Hill to investigate some of the other Restoration Churches. They became acquainted with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and after attending this church for a period of time, they became very restless. They continued their search, which led them to a man by the name of Hugh Beaver, who had just been introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ through some of the members from the Muncey Reserve.

The Conversion of Hugh Beaver

Hugh Beaver had a religious upbringing as a young boy. He was exposed to the Bible and to the tenets of a Protestant church that he attended on the Reservation. This early religious experience was instrumental in motivating him, as he matured, into looking for more spiritual insight. This insight came about when Sister Jane Dotson of the Muncey Reservation visited the Six Nations Reserve in 1937. Sister Jane was the daughter of Brother Isaac French and the niece of Brother George and Sister Julia Nicholas, and had an overwhelming desire to witness for the Gospel. This strong desire led her to her Uncle Beaver's home.

Although the trip from Muncey to Grand River was 100 miles and she did not have a means of transportation, Sister Jane was determined to walk these many miles, if necessary. She packed her clothes and started this arduous journey on foot. It wasn't very long, however, before a car pulled up and the driver of the car asked her where she was going. After finding out her destination, he invited her to get into the car and ride with him, even though he had not planned to travel that far.

When they arrived at the City of Brantford, which was still quite a distance from her Uncle Hugh Beaver's home on the Six Nations Reserve, the driver of the car said to Jane that he would drive her all the way to her Uncle's home. When they arrived at Hugh Beaver's home and the driver was dropping her off, she turned around to thank him and he had disappeared. It appears that this could very well have been a heavenly messenger who assisted a child of God in a time of need.

Hugh and his wife, Lillian, welcomed their niece, who entered into their house and introduced the Gospel to them. Hugh Beaver wholeheartedly accepted the words



Lillian and Hugh Beaver

of his niece and he immediately began making plans with his friend, Henry Likers, to make a trip to the Church in Muncey.

Brothers Wade Rigger and Matthew Miller were presiding over the meeting that was being held at Muncey on the Sunday that Mr. Beaver and his friend, Mr. Likers, attended. The meeting was held in the home of Sister Muskellunge and there was an overflowing crowd there. The meeting had just started when a knock was heard at the kitchen door, and two Indian men walked into the house.

When the meeting was opened for testimonies, Henry Likers arose and began to testify to the following: "We have come a long way today. We have come from Grand River and we have felt the Spirit of God in this meeting." He then began to speak from III Nephi the 27th chapter. This seemed very strange, since the elders had spoken on this very same chapter at the beginning of the meeting before these two men had entered the house. Hugh Beaver also gave a humble testimony.

Within one week of his trip to Muncey, Hugh Beaver received letters from Brothers Cadman and Furnier, informing him that elders from

our Church would begin to hold meetings on the Grand River Reservation. On the following Sunday, Brothers Riggen and Miller, with several brothers and sisters from Detroit, held a meeting in Grand River.

Brother Joseph Bittinger states that he, along with Brother William H. Cadman, made a trip to Grand River on October 15, 1937. They stayed at the home of the Beavers and held a number of meetings. It was not long after this that Brother and Sister Beaver were baptized into the Church, which was the actual beginning of the work on the Grand River Reservation.

Brother and Sister Beaver's baptisms took place in Detroit, Michigan. After his baptism, Brother Beaver said:

This gives me new life and something to live for. I wish my people could understand the feeling that I have and the surety of the covenant that I made with the Lord.

The Baptism of Charlotte Hill

After attending a few meetings at the home of Brother Beaver, the Hills moved to Lewiston, New York. One evening Charlotte Hill had a dream wherein she saw two personages in a bright light. One of the personages told her that, if she went to Hugh Beaver's home on Sunday, she would meet the true Church.

After this dream, the Hills decided to return to the Six Nations Reserve, and, on the first Sunday after returning home, they attended a meeting at Brother Beaver's home. Brother Joseph Loyalvo preached that day and Charlotte Hill felt an overpowering Spirit come over her. She testified to the glory of God for leading her to His Church.

A short time after this meeting, she was baptized by Brother William H. Cadman on the Tuscarora Reservation in Lewiston, New York in 1938.

Sister Hill had always been a very hard worker and was very talented with her hands. For many years, she exhibited her quilts, baked goods, and canned goods, and received many prizes at some of the fairs throughout the province of Ontario. Her crafts were also recognized by *The Courier News* in Buffalo. Sister Hill was the matriarch of a very talented

family, with her husband, Fred, and her children and grandchildren exhibiting many skills in native art and crafts.

She has been a faithful member of the Church and has held the office of a deaconess. She, like Sister Lillian Beaver, always had the outside light of her house on until the brothers and sisters arrived from Detroit and Windsor.



Sister Hill's Daughters

A Place to Worship

The Windsor Branch was given jurisdiction over the Six Nations Mission. At that time, all the Church services were still being held in the members' homes, which elicited the following remarks from Brother William H. Cadman, (in writing) to the General Church:

I want to say to this Church, that there is much interest being manifested on the Six Nations Reservation [Grand River] and my counsel to the Church is that we awaken to the opportunities that are now presented to us in preaching the Gospel to the Seed of Joseph. We need to start a movement there similar to what we are doing in Muncey. We need a place of worship at Oshwegon and a building of our own, if possible. I said, if possible. It is possible to do so if we will it to be.

I have never seen the day when the saints of God were blessed with as nice and comfortable homes as we have today. I give solemn warning to us all, lest we forget the obligations we as a Church have to the Covenant People of the Lord. Prosperity does not necessarily need to become the downfall of any person or persons, but should we allow prosperous times to make us proud, selfish and neglectful of the obligations we owe to downtrodden Israel, our prosperity will prove our downfall. An effectual door is now open to us on the Six Nations Reservation, yet we are still only ministering to them on one day out of every fourteen days. Let us arise and wake up to the opportunities that are at our door.

It was just prior to 1945 that the Christian Aid Hall was obtained for this purpose as requested by Brother William H. Cadman. This hall was located on the west side of the Reservation; therefore, meetings were held simultaneously in the Christian Aid Hall, on one side of the Reservation, and in Brother Hugh Beaver's home, on the other side.

Brother Cadman continued to request help from the members of the Church to purchase a permanent meeting place. He also stated that we should have a central place of meeting at Oshwegen.

A Team Effort

Many of the brothers and sisters from Windsor and Detroit assisted in taking the Gospel to the Seed of Joseph, located on the Grand River Reservation, and since the work was placed under the Windsor Branch, they provided the leadership. One of the most difficult things during this period of time was acquiring transportation. Brothers George Danychuck and Tony Lombardo were so generous in contributing their cars for this trip, that, in time, the vehicles were completely worn out.

Over a period of years, many elders contributed to the work of carrying the Gospel to Grand River, including Brothers Joseph Lovalvo, Clifford Burgess, Allen Henderson, Robert M. Watson, and Robert A. Watson, from Windsor; and Nicholas Pietrangelo, Concetto Alessandro, Dominic Cotellesse, and Tony Lovalvo from Detroit, with Brother Burgess being placed in charge.

Importance of Sunday School Class

Sister Sadie Jamieson lived in the Village of Oshwegen with her Aunt Susan. They had a small grocery store attached to their house, and they also volunteered their home for Sunday afternoon meetings, since the morning meetings were divided between the Christian Aid Hall and Brother Beaver's home. She taught a children's Sunday School class of over 20 children, according to Sister Leata Ford. Sister Sarah Neill later wrote of Sister Jamieson:

She takes quite an interest in this work with the children. We were glad to find that they have someone to teach the little ones, for we realize that the future of the Church depends upon them.

Brother Laird, although he himself was confined to a bed because of a physical condition, had sons who dedicated themselves to make the trip to Grand River each week to teach Sunday School classes. They also held meetings twice a week on the Reserve. On Tuesday and Thursday nights, they would meet at Brother Hill's home for a scripture study. Brother Laird said that God blessed these meetings, giving them a much deeper understanding of God's Word.

Brother William H. Cadman's Passion for the Work

Perhaps no one person felt the heavy burden of the work among the Seed of Joseph as much as Brother William H. Cadman, then president of the Church, which is reflected in these words:

I now wish to say a few words directly to the Indian people and especially to those who have become obedient to the Restored Gospel. Do not allow the weaknesses and the frailties of the Gentiles to weaken you in the faith. The Gospel was restored better than 120 years ago, and I must confess that the efforts made toward you by the Gentiles have been very feeble, indeed. They have been too much at ease in the land of Zion, fond of earthly toys. They have encouraged themselves too much in the things yet to take place and are leaving undone the things they should have done. You have obeyed the Gospel, be ye faithful and do not allow the slowness and frailties of the Gentiles to discourage you. (*The Gospel News*, February 1952)

And then, after a trip made to Grand River, he said:

I will add a word to my Gentile Brothers. . . We are not putting forth the effort on this Reservation [Grand River] that we should be. I might ask, while we are moving here and there, seeking our own welfare, what are our thoughts relative to moving on or near one of the Reservations and spending some of our time preaching the Gospel to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel? One thing we need on this Reservation is

a station wagon to help get the children to Sunday School, as well as to get others to Church. We also need a building of our own to meet in.

Though many fine and dedicated ministers and their families would shoulder the responsibilities of this Mission . . . [it] was always held back by the fact of never having a resident elder. This, in part, separates the success enjoyed in Muncey to the work involved in Grand River.

In the April Conference of 1953, Brother Cadman's words were heeded, subsequently having good results. He writes as follows.

There are some items of our business, which takes up considerable time, and among them is the preaching of the Gospel among the Indian people on this Western Hemisphere, a subject we are very much interested in.

There are several reservations we are presently laboring on. Some time ago the West Side Branch of the Church in Detroit bought a station wagon to carry on with the Muncey Reservation work in Canada. In this conference, we decided to help the Windsor, Ontario Branch to purchase a station wagon for their work on the Six Nations Reservation near Brantford, Ontario. On Saturday evening we had a collection and collected close to \$400, also at the close of the meeting we found \$170 in our freewill offering box, making a total of \$570. So we are sending a check to the Windsor Brothers for \$1,000 to help them to buy a station wagon so that they can continue to work among the Indian people, and may the Lord bless their efforts.

A Home for the Church in Grand River

In 1953, a fire destroyed the interior of the Christian Aid Hall, along with the Mission's hymnbooks, copies of the Bible and of The Book of Mormon. The Ladies' Circle, however, rose to the occasion and replaced the items that were lost.

The loss of this meeting place intensified the search for a new one. Eventually, a small hall with a second story was purchased in the small town of Oshwegan. This hall was also adjacent to the home of Sister Sadie Jamieson. The purchase of this hall contributed greatly to unifying the Mission. They could now hold all their meetings in the newly purchased hall.



Congregation from Six Nations Reserve
with Joe Lovalvo, circa 1950

Brother Anthony Lovalvo, who spent many years servicing this Mission, recalls:

The brothers and sisters worked very hard in fixing up this building; they also added an addition over the building, which later provided an apartment where the missionaries could stay during their trips there. Just think, no indoor plumbing, no gas, and no running water, but God blessed all of them.

On July 7th, 1957, the dedication of the Mission building took place. There were many people in attendance. They came from Canada and several States, including New York and California. Sister Loretta (Garlow) Nelson writes her observations of the dedication: "Being [of] Lamanite decent myself and also being from Grand River, this was a day of many blessings for me. It is marvelous to be able to be a part of this great work, but it is much more of a blessing to me to see the Word of God being fulfilled, in part, by the Gentiles bringing the fullness of the Gospel to the Lamanites."

A Miraculous Conversion

Brother Robert A. Watson recalls the conversion of one man from Six Nations:

As a young elder living in Windsor, Canada, I recall very vividly the conversion of Brother Joabi Hill. During the 1940s Brother Frank and Sister Leata Ford were inspired to visit the home of Joabi Hill. I don't believe they had ever met him before. They had to walk a great distance to reach the small shack that he was living in. They introduced themselves to Joabi and witnessed to him about Christ. Joabi told them that just prior to their coming, he was going to put a gun to his head and commit suicide. They invited him to come to Church.

He attended Church the next Sunday; and he testified that he met a man in the hospital named Fred Hill. Joabi was in the hospital because he had a terrible accident and his leg was amputated. Brother Hill had testified to Joabi, so we can see how wonderful the Lord works. Brother Joabi continued to attend services and I remember when, at a later time, he requested baptism. I had the privilege, along with another elder, of taking him into the waters of baptism.

This to me was a miraculous conversion because a life was spared from death and introduced to a new life of joy.



Baptismal candidate Joabi Hill
carried by Joe Reno (left) and
Joe Loyalvo (right)

THE WORK ON THE SARNIA INDIAN RESERVE

Neighboring the City of Port Huron in Michigan, and across the river marking the international boundary into Canada, is the Sarnia Reserve, where early in 1948, seeds were being planted that would eventually bring forth a harvest. At one point there were as many as 150 people attending the meetings conducted by Brothers Mark Randy, Joseph Loyalvo and Robert M. Watson.

The Conversion of the Maness Family

Brother Mark Randy decided one day to go to Port Huron to start knocking on doors in an effort to reach people with the message of the Restoration. He did not have any success and by 4:00 P.M. he became tired, thirsty, and hungry. No one even offered him a glass of water on that hot August day.

In the words of Brother Mark:

I had asked the last lady I spoke to for water, but she refused. Suddenly, I remembered Jesus saying, "...whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of [cold] water..." (Matthew 10:42) As these thoughts prevailed in my heart, I suddenly saw a vision of a small group of people walking on a sandy, lonely road. One of them took the hem of His garment and began to wipe His forehead. He looked toward me and spoke the same words that Matthew had written.

I asked him, "Lord, were you thirsty when you said these words?" He nodded his head, as if to signify, yes. The vision ended and my mind became open.

He then remembered a lady by the name of Emily Jackson, who had visited the Church and left her address. Brother Mark, even though he was very tired and without transportation or money, tried to locate this lady. He went into a grocery store to inquire into the location of the street on which she lived. Just when he was about to turn back, an old man came into the store that was able to direct him to the Jackson residence, which was on the riverfront.

Upon arriving at the Jackson residence, which was a small cabin partially supported by two poles driven into the river bed, much to his surprise, he found Emily Jackson preparing a meal for him, as she had been expecting him. She then proceeded to tell Brother Mark that a person had come to her home, calling her by name, and instructing her to prepare food and give rest to a servant of God who would be sent to her home. Brother Mark said, "Truly a messenger of God had prepared the way for His Gospel to be introduced in this home." Brother Mark proceeded to witness in this home to Emily Jackson and her two daughters, along with their husbands, who were later baptized into the Church.

One of the daughters of Emily Jackson by the name of Elvira Maness, along with her husband, Arthur Maness, took the leading part in offering their home for services to be held on the Sarnia Reserve where they lived.

Sister Elvira Maness' Testimony

The following words, as stated by Sister Maness, describe her conversion.

I was brought up in a church on the reservation. My parents were very active in church, and, when I was 12 years old, I felt the desire to do something for God. However, I drifted away. I was one of those who built their house on the sand. Later, I tried going to church. I was hungry, but I was not satisfied. This went on for years. I was starving and bewildered until I met Brother Mark Randy.

My husband and I went with Brother Mark to a conference in Detroit, Michigan. I observed and felt the love of God, which was manifested. It didn't matter what the color of your skin was. It seemed like one big family. I continued to attend church services at The Church of Jesus Christ, and, after hearing a few more sermons, I realized that I was getting the spiritual food that I needed. A little later a sister of the Church, by the name of Sister Summerville, along with another sister, asked if they could hold a service in my house and I told them they were welcome in my home.

I had many persecutions, but they only made me want to get baptized all the more. My husband and I were baptized on November 20, 1949.

A Miraculous Intervention

Shortly after Brother Arthur Maness was baptized, the Lord confirmed His protective hand upon His children. As Brother Maness was working at a particular job in a plant in Sarnia, a voice instructed him to stand back. Another worker was then summoned to take Brother Maness' workstation when a great explosion followed, killing the man who replaced Brother Maness.

Conversion of Brother Aylmer Plain

Brother Arthur Maness gave his testimony to a young Indian man by the name of Aylmer Plain, a man who achieved a degree of success as a Protestant minister and as a gospel singer. His addiction to alcohol, however, brought him to despair and this addiction led to his removal from his ministry. He had been wandering for many years going from church to church until the Restored Gospel was introduced to him.

In the words of Brother Plain, he says,

I praise our heavenly Father for giving me that discernment that made me perceive the true love that activated my Brother Arthur Maness when he said to me one day last winter, "Why don't you come and worship with us in our home? We would love to have you come." Truly God's love is great that he would send my brother to come after me in his own car in order that I might hear the blessed story of the Restored Gospel.

It thrilled my soul that I am a descendant of the Covenant People. I realized that I had been groping in the dark for knowledge of the beginning of my race, and I perceived that my acceptance of this blessed truth meant that I obeyed God's commandments and we should follow Him in all things. The devil has tried desperately to prevent my obedience to God. He has cast many doubts in my heart with unerring aim and I would be untruthful if I said that I went into the water with complete confidence. . . . Even after my baptism, the evil spirit pursued me. . . as Brother Mark Randy and I trudged up the hill where the brothers and sisters were waiting for us. The power of the devil was broken by the prayers of the saints that ascended up to God.

A glorious light came into my soul, and I recognized my brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus that evening. I spoke with a new tongue, one of humility and meekness. Before my baptism into The Church of Jesus Christ, I regarded myself as a leader, but now as a humble follower of Christ.

Brother Mark Randy Moves to California

On January 10, 1951, Brother Mark Randy had a dream that would lead him and his family to California. This dream was fulfilled as the Randy family moved to California in the month of June 1951.

This left a great need for leadership in the Sarnia Mission and Brother Aylmer Plain writes the following.

Our brothers from Port Huron and Detroit have been unable to make any visits to the Sarnia Reservation for some time. If we had an elder situated here, we could then have regular meetings, for which there is a desperate need. To illustrate this, let me bring your attention to a meeting that was held in the fall of 1950 in which Brother Mark Randy was in charge. We met under a large elm tree adjacent to my home. Enlisting some of the neighbors, we built a platform, along with improvising seating. We then had four men carry an old fashioned organ to the place of worship, and, when the meeting began, every seat was occupied.

Brother Joe Lovalvo began making Sunday visits in March of 1951.

The Maness Family Spared Tragedy

The Lord moves in miraculous ways to forewarn his children. Some time in the year 1951, Sister Maness had a dream in which she saw herself standing at the river shore with many other Indian people. Suddenly, a great storm arose from the United States side of the St. Clair River that was about to besiege the Sarnia Reservation. As she stood there, a voice spoke to her saying, "Pray so that your people might be spared."

Two years later in the spring of 1953, a great tornado ravaged the cities of Port Huron and Sarnia. At the onset of the storm, Sister Maness was standing at her front window, which faces the city of Port Huron and the St. Clair River. As the storm and tornado came closer to her home, she remembered her dream. She quickly took her children into the living room and knelt in prayer to Almighty God, asking Him to have mercy upon her home and her people. In a wonderful way, the peace of God came upon her and it was made known to her while she was still on her knees that the Lord had answered her prayers.

She then went back to her front window and she saw the tornado heading north. Brother Joseph Lovalvo later recalled that the tornado struck the downtown section of Sarnia causing great destruction:

The Maness family came to my home on Saturday morning full of gratitude and thanksgiving. We sang hymns of praise and glorified God for several hours.

Brother William H. Cadman Admonishes the Church

Brother William H. Cadman led the call for young men and women to come to the forefront of the missionary work of the Church. He further said that the ranks in the missionary fields would have to be replenished in due time. He urged the Church to be united in this endeavor, expressing displeasure of the apparent ease in Zion among the saints.

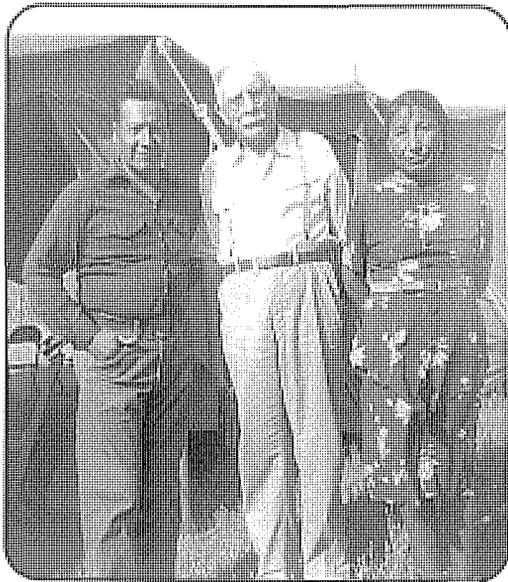
The admonishment of the words of Brother William H. Cadman served as a warning, but unfortunately, they went unheeded. It appears that negligence in Port Huron and Sarnia ultimately led to their decline. Brother William H. Cadman said that from the beginning of the work in Port Huron, the seed had fallen upon good ground, and the brothers worked hard to maintain the work. This also applies to the work in Sarnia. The problem was that in critical times, the much-needed reinforcements to successfully carry on the work were lacking, which led to a decline in membership.

In April of 1954, the missions of Port Huron and Sarnia were combined on a trial basis and, at a later time, the two missions were combined on a permanent basis. By the mid-1960s, this mission ceased to exist. Many of the saints passed on to their reward during the 1950s and the 1960s.

Brother and Sister Maness led productive and spiritual lives well into the next decade. They eventually transferred their membership to the Muncey Mission in Ontario, Canada. They both passed away as faithful members, leaving behind wonderful examples of service to God.

MISSIONARY EFFORTS IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Sometime prior to World War II, a group of five Native Americans from the Cheyenne River Tribe visited the home of Brother William H. Cadman on their way to Washington D.C. for tribal business. One of these visitors, Mr. Clyde Low Dog, invited the Cadmans to visit him at his home in South Dakota if they were ever out west. In the spring of 1953, Brother Cadman, his wife, Sister Sadie, Brother Joseph Bittinger and his wife, Sister Lydia, decided to follow up on this invitation on their way home from a visit to California. It was during this visit that they expressed an interest to Mr. Low Dog in returning to the area to conduct services, to which he gave his enthusiastic support.



W. H. Cadman with White Buffalo Man
(grandson of Chief Sitting Bull) and his wife
at Cheyenne Agency, South Dakota, 1953

First Missionary Trip in the Summer of 1953

Time was not wasted in taking advantage of this opportunity. On August 10, 1953, Brother Cadman, the Bittingers, and Brother Thurman

and Sister Birdie Furnier departed for South Dakota. They held their first meeting the night after they arrived at Marksville, on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, on August 14, in a 24 by 40 foot tent Brother Bittinger had recently purchased. They conducted services every day for two weeks, meeting in the



Preparing for departure to Cheyenne Agency, South Dakota, 1953: Joe and Lydia Bittinger, Birdie and Thurman Furnier

evening, except on Sundays, with as many as 25 attending. During the day they spent much of their time meeting new people, anointing the sick, and distributing clothes to the needy. Before they left to return home, these great pioneers of the faith were able to enjoy some of the fruit of their labors, when, just prior to their departure, Brother Bittinger took their first converts into the Missouri River for baptism—James Meeter, Isaac UsefulHeart, and Ramona and Milton Benoist.

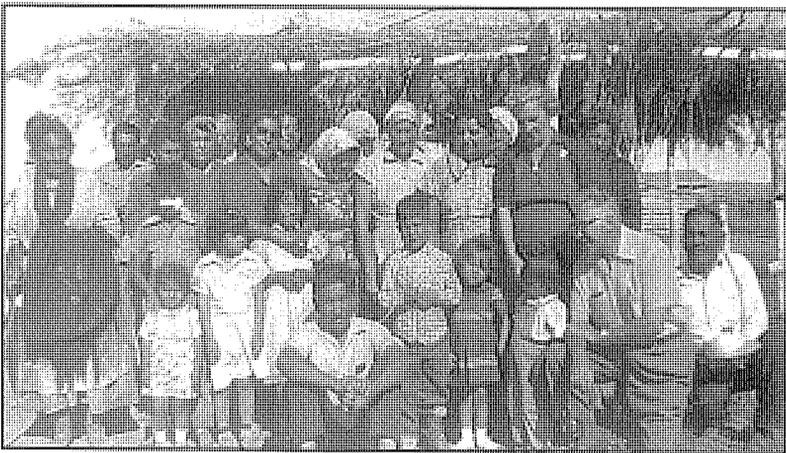
Additional Missionary Trips

Subsequent missionary trips were made virtually every year throughout the decade of the fifties, usually during the summer months. Providing the leadership were two apostles and one evangelist and their wives, all from Pennsylvania, the Bittingers, the Furniers, and the Shazers (Joseph and Sarah), making a total of 13 trips between them. Other brothers and sisters lending their support on some of these trips were Henry Johnson, Richard and Delvia Lowther, Charles King, Edward and Huldah Stroko, Sam and Ruth Kirschner, and Barnharts, Jim and Eva Moore, and Alex Robinson. They used a very effective team approach to missionary work, with at least four or more people making every trip. These visits ranged from a couple of weeks to one extended stay of two months by the Furniers and Sister Lowther in 1955, where they lived in an old hut in the reservation town of Wakpala.

One cannot help but admire the qualities of self-sacrifice and determination of these early saints to bring the Gospel to the members of the Sioux Tribe, which is perhaps best illustrated by a direct quote from Brother Furnier himself:

Brother UsefulHeart's home is located off the highway near Green Grass, South Dakota, which is a distance of 71 miles from Mobridge, South Dakota [where they were lodging at the time]. In order to reach his home, we had to cross the Moreau River twice, by this I mean we had to ford the river, which was up to the bottom of our car doors, but the river having a rocky foundation, we were able to ford it without any trouble. (*The Gospel News*, October 1954.)

The dedicated efforts of these brothers and sisters to tenderly cultivate and nurture those who were young in the faith did bring forth fruit. The message they brought was simple, yet profound: the promise of salvation through Christ by way of faith, repentance, and baptism, and the revelation of The Book of Mormon that they are the descendants of Joseph, one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel—heirs of the covenant blessings through obedience to the Gospel. They were blessed with baptisms, healings, and miracles on virtually every trip. Brother Shazer wrote of



Outdoor meeting at Cherry Creek, Cheyenne Agency, South Dakota in 1955 with Thurman Furnier in foreground

the joy of introducing the saints there to the ordinance of feet washing for the first time in 1954.

Native Leadership

By the mid 1950s, two congregations had emerged, one on the Cheyenne River Reservation, centered at Eagle Butte, and the other on the Standing Rock Reservation, centered at Wakpala, both in South Dakota. The brothers realized that for these missions to become well established, there was an urgent need for locally based leadership. After much prayer and consideration they felt directed to ordain Brother Isaac UsefulHeart, from the Cheyenne River Reservation, an elder in 1954, and Brothers Earl DeMarrias and James Meeter, from the Standing Rock Reservation, to the offices of elder and teacher, respectively in 1955. Sister DeMarrias had already been ordained a deaconess the previous year.



Ordained an Elder in the Church and Sioux Indian:
Earl DeMarrias and his wife, circa 1955

A Home for the Church

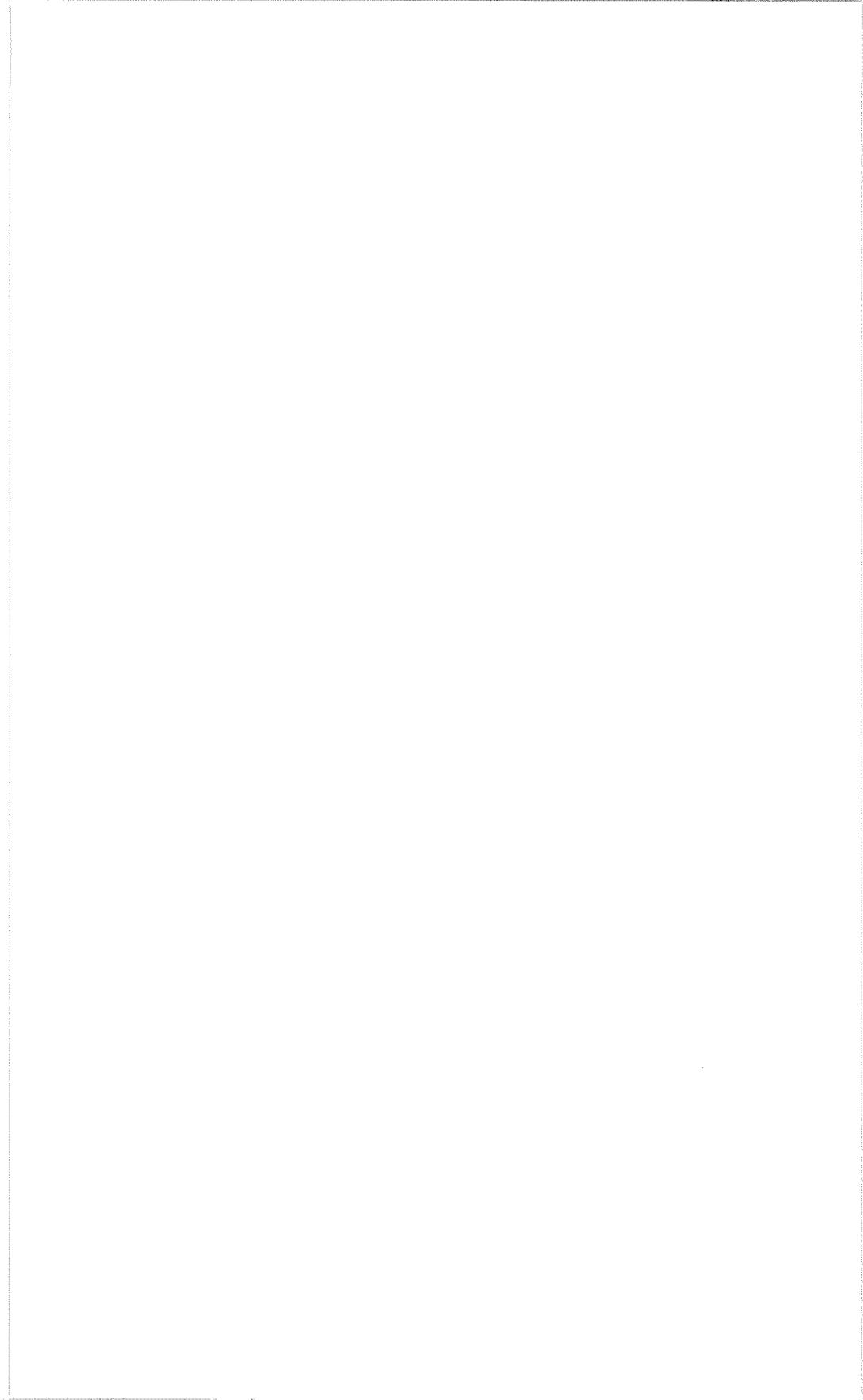
As the congregation grew, finding a house of worship became a priority, and, in 1957, the Church purchased a building in Wakpala. During the summer of 1957, Brothers Tony Picciuto and Gene Kline from Painesville, Ohio, along with the Furniers, traveled to Wakpala to repair and remodel this newly acquired facility. They added two rooms and a kitchen that could be used by visiting missionaries, which was a big help in furthering this work.

The following year, Brothers Herb Hemmings and Richard Christman, who had accompanied the Furniers and the Moores to the Reservation, put a new roof on the recently acquired Church building in Wakpala.

In addition, some time around 1959, Brother Bud Aldous and his wife and family moved to Rapid City, South Dakota. Although they were about 250 miles from the nearest Native American mission, they endeavored to lend their support to the work by worshiping with them as often as they could.

8

History
of the
Foreign Missionary
Work



CHAPTER EIGHT

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.
Matthew 28:19, 20

MISSIONARY WORK IN ARGENTINA

Very little material has been available relative to the missionary endeavors in Argentina. At the General Church Conference held at Youngstown, Ohio on April 6-7, 1946, the late Evangelist Patsy (Pasquale) DiBattista, with intense, albeit humble emotion, bore an impassioned testimony concerning his desire to spread the Gospel in Argentina, South America. He also expressed his wish that the ministry lay hands upon him and beseech the Lord to be with him in his mission. Accordingly, this ordinance was administered, with the Spirit of the Lord seasoning the prayer.

Immediately after prayer, the late Apostle Ishmael D'Amico related an experience he had a few weeks before this date, which he said was fulfilled now that Brother DiBattista was planning to go to Argentina. The priesthood assembled at this Conference passed a motion to give Brother DiBattista permission to ordain elders, as he deemed advisable while endeavoring to spread the Restored Gospel in South America.

In the month of April of 1947, Brother William H. Cadman received the following letter from Brother DiBattista, as he was about to embark for Mendoza, Argentina:

Dear Brother Cadman: I would like to make a request that you present my name before the Church and ask all the saints to pray for me that the Lord may accompany me with His Holy Spirit and give me

success to bring many souls to the knowledge of the true Restored Gospel of these latter days.

While in Argentina, Brother DiBattista wrote another letter to Brother William H. Cadman, which was printed in the July 1947 issue of *The Gospel News*. Excerpts of this letter are provided below.

Dear Brother Editor: . . . my health is good. I surely thank God for His mercies in keeping me from day to day, and I also thank Him for accompanying me on my trip, which saved me from all danger. . . . I was disappointed because I didn't find things so favorable in regards to the folks that I came to visit. They are members of the Pentecostal Church. Only God can open their minds to make them understand the true Gospel of His Kingdom. But, Brother Cadman, my hope is not lost because there are many, many people in this land besides them.

I have quite a few addresses of different people who are living in South America, and with the help of God, I will try to visit them as soon as I receive my trunk. My hope is that by visiting them, the Lord will open the door of their hearts to accept His blessed Gospel. Brother Cadman, now that I came here, I can't look after anything else but to try with God's help to establish His Restored Church in South America, which is also a promised land unto those who love Him.

Things here are not like North America; they are lacking many things and conveniences. Nevertheless, I will sacrifice anything as long as the Lord will give the opportunity to establish His Church here. . . .

My trip took me three and a half days and three nights, but actual flying time was 32 hours and 20 minutes. . . .

Your Brother in Christ, Pasquale DiBattista

After this letter, no other records have been found regarding any missionary labors in Argentina up to 1960.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN ITALY

Early Missionaries to Italy

Brother Dominic Todaro always had a great desire to return to his native land of Italy to take the glad tidings of the Restored Gospel to his

family as well as any others who would care to listen. His desire came to fruition when he arrived in Villa San Guiseppe, Province of Reggio Calabria in 1948. He held several meetings in which he bore his testimony and related the story of the Restored Gospel. The Lord rewarded his efforts with seven baptisms, including his 82-year-old mother.

In a letter printed in the December 1947 issue of the Gospel News, Brother Anthony Corrado told of Brother Todaro's success, saying,

In spite of the opposition that was encountered, Brother Todaro continued to hold meetings in Villa San Guiseppe (later changed to Villa San Giovanni). These glad tidings will inspire and fill the hearts of God's people with joy. One more step was taken in fulfilling God's Word to have the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to all the people of the earth.

At the January 1948 General Church Conference held in Rochester, New York, Brother Todaro gave an extensive report of his missionary work in Italy, telling of the blessings he received and the seven people he baptized. At the next Conference, April 1948, held at the Southeastern High School in Detroit, Michigan, a motion was passed to ask the Church to fast and pray on Memorial Day for direction in preaching the Gospel in Italy. Included in the motion were instructions that the brothers and sisters meet in their respective Branches and Missions for this purpose.

The effect of the fasting and prayer was productive. Of a consequence, Brother Natale Sumaro of New Brunswick, New Jersey volunteered to go to Italy. He had many friends and relatives there to whom he desired to give his testimony. At the General Church Conference held in Youngstown, Ohio in October 1948, he was called before the Ministerial Board to be interviewed. After a thorough examination, the Board recommended his ordination as an elder. In that conference, a motion was passed that the General Church give Brother Sumaro financial aid while doing missionary work in Italy. Soon after his ordination, he departed for Italy to begin his missionary endeavors.

Later, a report was given that Brother Sumaro baptized 49 persons. Unfortunately, the names of those he baptized or the places where the

baptisms took place are not available. Brother Sumaro also ordained several Italian brothers as elders. In Italy, the name of Brother Sumaro is spoken with great respect to this day.

Revelation to the Church

In support of the spiritual need in Italy, Brother Demetrio Turano of San Diego, California was given a dream, as follows:

On the night of January 15, [1949], I dreamed that my uncle, who has passed away from this life, appeared to me and asked, "How are you?" I answered, "Thank God that we are getting along day by day." Then he said, "I know that you have found The Church of Jesus Christ. The Grace of God has also arrived in our country [meaning Italy], and if I were still living, I would also accept this Gospel, but now I have to wait until the last day. Brother Natale Sumaro, who has come to preach in this country, has a great work to do, but it is too difficult for him to do it alone, as he needs a companion to help him."

After saying these words to me, my uncle disappeared. In his place there appeared our Brother Sumaro who said, "Dear brother, tell the whole Church to pray for me, and tell them that I need help, for it is a great work and too difficult for me to do all alone. Salute my family for me and all the saints far and near."

(Note: This dream was accepted as a revelation from God, instructing the Church to send help to Italy.)

It was reported at the July 1949 General Church Conference that a brother in Italy, Giuseppe Azzinaro, was ordained an elder. At this conference, a motion was passed that all members in Italy would be under the jurisdiction of the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch of the Church.

Brother Gorie Ciaravino reported that he had forwarded all salient information to the Italian government for the purpose of registering the Church there. After overcoming a few obstacles, the Church was incorporated in Italy in 1958.

Because the Church was increasing numerically in Italy, it was decided by the priesthood at this conference that the Italian members should be supplied with hymnals. Accordingly, Brother V. James Loyalvo was ap-

pointed to compile fifty hymns to be sent to Italy as soon as possible. Within a short time, this was accomplished, and the saints in Italy were singing our hymns in their native tongue.

Concern, mixed with desire, increased in many brothers' hearts regarding the missionary work in Italy. Because of the fervor displayed, the Church called for a fast and prayer period of three months. This brought immediate results. Shortly afterwards, Brothers Rocco V. Biscotti, Anthony A. Corrado, and others visited Italy as missionaries. (Reports of these brothers' efforts will be given later.)

While living in New Jersey, Brother and Sister Gabriel Mazzeo received a letter from a brother who was recently baptized in Italy. He wrote: (*Note: The letter is not reprinted in its entirety.*)

Dear Brother Gabriel in Christ:

The blessings of Our Lord be upon you from heaven for what you do for the servants of the Lord in the Holy Ministry of Our Heavenly Father, Amen.

I am one of your brothers in Christ. My name is Natale Bruno. You cannot imagine how happy and joyful I am since I made my covenant with the King of Kings. At the age of 57, I came to the understanding of the teachings of Our Lord. When those beautiful words are read by our Brother Guiseppe Azzinaro, my heart is moved with real joy at hearing words I have never heard before.

My wife and I are baptized and are completely happy. My dear brother in Christ, it is now three Sundays that Brother Azzinaro is in charge of the services. Brother Sumaro has been gone for about 15 days, as there are other brothers and sisters in other towns. Now we are waiting for him to return to be in our company.

We are happy that the Lord has called Brother G. Azzinaro as an Elder in the Church. He does all things as the Lord directs him. . . . I am your brother in Christ, Natale Bruno

Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive record of Brother Giuseppe Azzinaro's work in Italy. However, two years later, he sent a letter to the Church in America, which, after Brother Mario Milano translated it into English, was printed in *The Gospel News*. Since the letter is of importance, excerpts of it are inscribed below.

Dear Brother Cadman:

In writing to you for the first time, I want you to know I am Brother Giuseppe Azzinaro, the minister of the new mission of Corona, Cosenza.

To date, we have 57 members in all—and a good prospective of many more coming in, in the near future. It will please you, I'm sure, to know that our brethren are very fervent in the Spirit and show a great deal of obedience.

We all enjoy good health . . . I must further inform you that the work of the Lord here is proceeding very well.

The Lord blesses us often and, due to His atonement, we feel much reassured for a better future. For once we were in darkness but now we are walking in the new path of light and the power of God is made manifest among us.

The Lord has entrusted us with the duty to preach His divine word in these parts of Italy, where the true and Genuine Gospel has never been heard before.

Dear Brother, the scope of writing this letter to you is that we may put ourselves in contact with the General Church so we may be acquainted and informed of all things that take place at the Conferences that are held.

Yes, all the Saints here are interested to know of the activities of the Mother Church, that by it we may receive inspiration and advice for we are still like babies in the Gospel. Hence, we need the spiritual nourishment . . .

Yes, brother, many here thirst, and hunger for the word of the Prophets. We have a great desire to labor in the vineyard of the Lord but, unfortunately, we lack the necessary means. As for ourselves, we ask but nothing except that we are endeavoring to bring forth the designs of the Lord. Giuseppe Azzinaro, Provincia di Cosenza, Italy

In the July 1949 conference, held at Monongahela, Pennsylvania, a report was given that Brother Salvatore Feola had been ordained an elder in Italy. Brother Feola, his wife, and family eventually came to the United States of America, establishing their residence in Bethpage, New York. Brother Feola returned to Italy several times, preaching the Restored Gospel and encouraging the saints with appreciable success.

The Book of Mormon in Italy

Now that the Church was established in Italy, the work of translating the literature of The Church of Jesus Christ was begun. With the help of Brothers Mario Milano and Frank Palermo, many of the Church pamphlets were translated. Among the top priority was the translating of The Book of Mormon into the Italian language. Many problems arose while the book was being translated, but eventually, in 1958, it was completed.

From the very inception of the Restored Gospel, the Church has faced a great amount of criticism because of Her belief in The Book of Mormon. Whether by ignorance or by design, The Book of Mormon has been maligned and rebuffed. It is one of the tenets of The Church of Jesus Christ that belief in The Book of Mormon comes through the revelation of God to individuals, no matter where they may be located geographically. When the Italian Book of Mormon was received in Italy, many of our members began to have experiences to authenticate its veracity. It is apropos to inscribe one of these experiences, this one received by Sister Caterina Chirico in Italy.

My house appeared to be all illuminated, and a large crowd of people was there. Upon the table, two books laid there (The Bible and The Book of Mormon).

In the meeting there appeared a crown of flowers that consisted of many colors. In the center of the flowers there was a baby dressed in white leaning as if he were asleep.

I tried my best to talk to the crowd of people concerning the Gospel because there was no elder present, but I started to cry and could not speak. An old man came near me and said, "Don't cry, but be of good heart, for you are the elected daughter of the truth. Love the Lord only, because I am with you. In time there will be peace." And he said again, "Be of good heart, for I am with you." He signaled with his right hand near my bedside, then he disappeared.

It is truly wonderful how God revealed the equivalent value of the Bible and The Book of Mormon to this humble sister.

Status Report on the Church in Italy

In 1951, Brother Emilio Milano wrote a lengthy letter to Brother William H. Cadman in which he expresses some concerns. Following are some of its excerpts.

Dear Brother in Christ:

Ever since my brother Mario Milano of Cleveland has led me in the resplendent way of the truth, my soul is filled with a radiant light that emanates from the Omnipotent God, our true and only Father.

I have been in San Demetrio Corone to meet with Brother Giuseppe Azzinaro who baptized me with the express purpose to find out . . . what is necessary to be done for the spreading of the [Gospel] in Italy.

I can assure you that Minister Azzinaro is very active and worthy of the office entrusted to him. A man of little culture, but possessed of a great faith in God and assisted by a Divine Light that illuminates him to give a great future to The Church of Jesus Christ in Italy and particularly in the southern regions.

In Provincia di Salerno, where Azzinaro has baptized 10 brothers, it is necessary to elect a minister on the premises to take care of worship services every Sunday same as it is done in St. Demetrio. . . .

At Ponza there is another nucleus of baptized and to be baptized who were waiting for Minister Azzinaro, who was unable to go because of lack of funds. He derives his livelihood from hard labor of the field (as it is with the rest of the brethren in St. Demetrio), and there remains nothing for him to spare for the spreading of the Word of God in places far from his home.

Another necessity to give greater impetus to the spread of our Church is to provide places to dedicate for worship. The first could be built in St. Demetrio because they are now meeting in a modest room in the country. If they were in town, they could obtain many more converts. They would like to build a Church with their own labor free, but they do not have the financial [responsibilities] to buy the materials. Wherever Churches are built, there will be many adherents.

To do this, many means are necessary. But for now, or later on, things could be done in a modest way and this could be started where there are at least one hundred converts. St. Demetrio will soon be the first town to have this number

Give the means to Minister Azzinaro to go out especially during the winter months, when he is not engaged in the work of the fields. In this

I could assist him too, reaching as far as Naples or Rome. In these parts of the Northern regions, I shall not fail to do a preparatory work among friends and acquaintances.

There is a need for Bibles and pamphlets . . . to be distributed to those that seek and love the truth. . . .

It would be very wise if within a year a Church member would come to Italy to visit these brethren to see with his own eyes what to do to give greater impetus to the propagation of the faith.

They should speak rather correctly in order to be understood in every Province of Italy, in as much as here we have too many dialects, and among the humble, many illiterates. . . . You will find me always ready to serve you and my true God with all my heart.

Summary is as follows: 1. New ministers, 2. Bibles and other publications, 3. Places of worship, and 4. Some, but adequate funds for Missionary work, and the selection of men of integrity. . . .

Every beginning is hard, but with the help of the Omnipotent, even in Italy, the great miracle to see the people return to the Commandments of Jesus Christ, is possible.

Yours, Brother Emilio Milano, Vicenza, Italy

(Note: The sincerity and zeal of Brother Milano bore much spiritual fruit in Italy. In 1953, he was ordained an elder and continued to labor unceasingly for the Church in Italy until his death.)

In 1951, Brother Nick Iorio went to Buccino, Italy and enjoyed some success in witnessing for the Church. As a result of his labors, several persons were baptized. He found that small town abounding in poverty, which moved him to great pity, and, upon his return to the United States, he solicited food and clothing from the Church members. The response was immediate as 19 large trunks of canned food and clothing were gathered. With a grateful heart and a jubilant spirit Brother Iorio departed for Italy again.

He hired a freight company to deliver the trunks to the docks at New York City. On his arrival, he found that the longshoremen were on strike. God, however, had inspired three brothers to go to the docks to bid Brother Iorio "Bon Voyage." With the help of these brothers, the trunks were loaded on the ship. Upon his arrival in Naples, he was met

warmly by his niece. She had engaged a truck to haul the containers to Buccino. Upon his arrival there, he dispensed these items to the poor.

Opposition Grows

Brother Nick spent three months in Italy visiting the places where the saints lived and then returned to America. He made a third trip to Italy, baptizing six persons, including his niece and her husband. In Buccino he held meetings in a small room, as neither halls nor empty stores were available. According to his account, every time he held meetings, many attempted to disturb the meeting. They would purposely parade up and down the street, carrying the statue of Mary in order to distract those in the meeting. In those days, there was much persecution against The Church of Jesus Christ in Italy.

Despite the persecution, Brother Iorio persevered in his missionary endeavors and was rewarded with respect by his neighbors and others, who affectionately called him "Uncle Nick." He preached the Restored Gospel with the enthusiasm that is inspired by the Holy Spirit and left a "good name" wherever he went. Upon returning to America, his family and he moved to North Carolina. He had an urgent desire to return to Italy to finish his spiritual labors, but illness overtook him, and on December 27, 1969, this wonderful brother passed away.

In 1952, Brother Rocco V. Biscotti (an apostle of the Church) requested to go to Italy as a representative of the Church. At the April 1952 General Church Conference, his wish was granted, and a motion was passed to assist him financially during his stay in Italy. He stayed in Italy a short while, visiting the saints and encouraging them to hold fast to the Faith. Upon his return to the United States, he attended the General Church Conference in April 1953, where he reported that the Church in Italy was receiving a great amount of opposition from the Catholic Church. He also reported that there was great poverty in Italy, and the members needed financial assistance as well as prayers for their physical and spiritual well-being.

At this conference, the subject of buying a building for worship purposes in San Demetrio Corone arose. After much discussion, a motion was passed to drop the matter for the time being. Circa 1959-60, the building of a church structure was started, and, with some financial help from the parent church in America, it was finally finished. It was a small building, but was adequate for the members for the time being. The total cost was \$2500-\$3000.

The executive secretary informed the priesthood that Brother Emilio Milano had been ordained an elder in Italy.

Missionary Work Performed by Italian Elders

In the month of November 1953, good news arrived from Italy. Brothers Emilio Milano, Giuseppe Buonofiglio, and Nick Iorio had been busy spreading the Restored Gospel in the region of San Gregorio Magna, where they baptized 18 persons. Although the names of the converts were not given, it was time to rejoice for the untiring endeavors of these brothers. In order to appreciate their labors, one has to realize that their mode of traveling was mostly by foot and by rail. The hardships they endured were relegated to insignificance compared to the blessings of seeing people converted unto the Lord. (Note: Brother Buonofiglio was also ordained an evangelist and was the presiding officer of the Church at San Demetrio Corone until his death in 1992).

Of utmost importance, Italy needed permanent missionaries. Unfortunately, this never happened. Brothers went there for short periods of time, and then returned home. Jesus Christ expressed it very clearly, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

To expedite reports and other matters of importance, the Missions in Italy were placed under the jurisdiction of the following Branches of the Church: Buccino and San Gregorio Magna under Warren, Ohio; Ponza under New Brunswick, New Jersey; and San Demetrio Corone under Cleveland, Ohio.

Account of Apostle A. A. Corrado's Efforts in Italy

In the April 1955 General Church Conference, Apostle Anthony A. Corrado expressed his desire to go to Italy. This was granted, giving him also the authority to ordain elders, teachers, deacons, and deaconesses as the need arose. The following excerpt is from Brother Corrado's brief journal:

On June 16, 1955 . . . I left N.Y.C. . . . for Rome. . . . We landed at Rome Airport [on] June 17th . . . I remained overnight in Rome. I left for my hometown, Bugnara, the next day. My mother and relatives came to me at a nearby station. It was a happy and joyful occasion to see my mother after 35 years . . . We traveled by auto to my home. There a large crowd of relatives and friends gathered to greet me.

. . . I began to preach the Gospel to relatives, friends, and those whom I came in contact. I could see that the people were happy to hear and know more about the Way of Salvation.

I began to write to the different missions in Italy. It was rather difficult to receive answers to my letters due to the fact that some people could not be located and others took a great deal of time in replying. I finally was able to contact some elders.

I went to the American Embassy in Rome. . . . They gave me needed information on how to go about having the Church recognized in Italy . . . I contacted a very fine attorney, named Mr. Giacomo Rosapepe, who began immediately to work on the recognition of the Church.

I began to visit towns and cities where the saints were located . . . On one missionary trip; I was accompanied by Brother Emilio Milano. We had a joyful time holding services among the saints at different places. We found them happy in the Lord. We were surely welcomed in their midst. They listened with open hearts to the words that were uttered unto them . . .

. . . While we were at Brother Buonofiglio's home in San Demetrio Corone, Sister Buonofiglio became ill one night and I officiated the ordinance to her and she was healed . . .

One afternoon in Bugnara, I started to talk to a group of women that were sitting in the shade on the roadside. I began to preach to them and I felt a great liberty so that I talked for about three hours, and as I looked around, about 50 or 60 men and women had gathered to listen. Even when I stopped talking, some of the people with tears in their eyes asked questions about the Way of Salvation. I felt in sympathy with

these poor souls in their condition, knowing that they were hearing the truth, gladly receiving it, but still with the fear of the persecution that might befall them.

On another occasion, I went in a home one night to preach. There I found that a little six-year-old girl was burning with fever. The mother asked me to anoint her daughter and as soon as I finished my prayer, the fever left at once. The mother went to the neighbor where there was a young woman who had been in a cast for eight months due to some rare disease of the bone. She told her experience to her and the whole family asked me to visit with them. While I was preaching the gospel to them, they asked me to anoint her and I did. Some time ago I received a letter from Italy telling me that they removed the cast and that the young woman is walking around.

. . . I ordained four brothers into the priesthood. . . . I feel to praise God that while I was in Italy, I had no fear. I felt that I was not alone and the Lord was with me. I knew that the prayers of the saints were going before God continually in my behalf.

There is still work to be done in Italy in order that we might have the Italian Government recognize the priesthood of our Church there, that they may be able to perform legal work there such as performing marriages. My recommendation to the Church is that we send a good Italian-speaking missionary to instruct and teach the priesthood the Faith and Doctrine of our Church. . . . Brother A.A. Corrado, Youngstown, Ohio

Realignment of the Church in Italy

At the General Church Conference on April 4, 1956, a reshuffling of the Missions in Italy took place. San Demetrio Corone was removed from the jurisdiction of the Cleveland, Ohio Branch and placed under the Painesville, Ohio Branch; Buccino, San Gregorio was transferred from the Warren, Ohio Branch to the Lockport, New York Branch; and Ponza was transferred from the New Brunswick Branch to the Bronx, New York Branch.

Adversity Becomes Opportunity

Since the birth of the Church in Jerusalem, persecution has been a common occurrence against believers in Jesus Christ. In the Restored

Gospel era, persecution has been the Church's constant companion, and in Italy, our missionaries met with persecution as well. Through a strange coincidence, and not of his own volition, Brother Dominic Todaro, one of our missionaries, became involved in a dispute between Catholics. However, it turned out to be a favorable situation for our brother.

It is recorded by a newspaper reporter that on a certain day, in Villa San Guiseppe (later called Villa San Giovanni), while a group of Catholic faithful was taking part in a procession honoring the statue of St. Joseph, they were attacked by the village police and the militia, injuring many of them. The whole town appealed to the Bishop for redress, but to no avail.

The reporter stated that, in exasperation, the townspeople appealed to a pastor of the so-called "Church of Jesus Christ" which had been founded by Joseph Smith, to champion their cause. The reporter wrote:

Truly we wished we could have remained silent in regards to what has taken place recently in the town of Villa San Guiseppe. But our mission as newspaper reporters, and the keen interest shown by our readers, usually constrains us to present our readers a more detailed account on the incident. And even in a case like this one, ours is a candid and objective report.

In our article of Friday, August 9, we reported on a grave incident that occurred between the police and the faithful while they were taking part in the procession in honor of their Patron Saint Joseph. Also in the same article we gave the primary causes for such incident. Now after a period of ten days, we are again compelled to treat on this subject due to the grave situation that has developed.

The faithful of Pietrabanca, supported by the entire population of Villa San Guiseppe, all this time has been appealing to the Bishop's Office—but in vain, that they might see to it that St. Joseph (the Statue) might be brought to their homes as they have been accustomed for centuries, and until four years ago. But to this appeal, unfortunately, [was] completely ignored, and worst of all, no effort was made to appease them.

The faithful, in exasperation, and in sign of protest, have appealed to a pastor of the so-called "Church of Jesus Christ" founded by Joseph Smith . . . with a threat of abjuring the Catholic Faith.

This is the most tragic aspect of this situation. Even more tragic is the fact that the women still bear the evidence of fresh wounds inflicted [on] them by the charging militia and the policemen, inasmuch as theirs was and still is, a matter of protest. Up to Saturday morning and the early hours of Sunday morning we hoped to hear some good news or a promise from the Bishop's Office. But nothing came, which increased the exasperation.

When the pastor of the so-called "Church of Jesus Christ" arrived [in] a car in Pietrabianca about one hundred persons were waiting for him. In those who were present we noticed some anxiety, but, a few moments later, they followed the pastor into a hall that was reserved for them.

There were some who did endeavor to dissuade them from going with the pastor, but to them they chanted almost in unison, "We are now more Catholics than ever before" (meaning true Catholics of the Universal Restored Church of Jesus Christ). We have appealed to this pastor with the sole hope the bishop might regain his senses by retracting his steps. We sincerely hoped [that] the bishop might intervene, but as he failed to do so, we have decided to hearken to the words of this pastor. But we shall appeal to Pope Pius XII for an explanation before we are forced to desert the Faith." In order for us to fulfill our duties as reporters, we had to stay and listen to the "lesson of conversion" by the so-called Church of Jesus Christ.

Of those present in the hall, only a few were the intellectuals, the rest were mostly humble peasants; and what seems to have shocked us most was the great number of children present. And as the pastor went on with his preaching, the enthusiasm of the audience increased so much that for a while we thought as though we were amongst a very faithful group of members of the so-called Church of Jesus Christ. In fact, the people were so pleased [that], at the end of the service all agreed the pastor should return again to further instruct them on the faith and belief of the Church of Jesus Christ before they would call for their baptism, if they were willing to do so. (*The Gospel News*, December 1957)

In 1958, in the London, England newspaper, *The Sunday Express*, an article appeared concerning Brother Dominic Todaro's missionary work in Italy and some interesting things that transpired. Following are excerpts of the article:

“Trouble (and pastor Todaro) Hits the Little World of Don Antonio”

Turmoil has come to the little world of Don Antonio, the priest in this mountain village of Villa San Giuseppe. For hundreds of villagers are threatening to become Protestant.

The man responsible for the conversions is an American evangelist, Pastor Domenico Todaro. He gave up his job as a baker in New York's Bronx area to come to Italy on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ—an American religious sect. And soon he was at work in this little village in the toe of Italy.

One day Don Antonio, the priest, walked among his flock as they tended their orange and lemon trees on Mount Aspro. He looked down and saw some of the villagers in the sea far below. They were being baptized . . . by Pastor Todaro. And many more said they would do the same.

A few days after this incident, Pastor Todaro found that he was in trouble with the police. He was called to the local court to explain why he did not fill in an immigration form on a previous visit to Italy—eight years ago. He was fined. . . .

Now he has been given a police warning: “If a single inhabitant of San Giuseppe catches cold at your next ceremony in the sea, get ready to be arrested, for causing injury to the public health.”

Troubled indeed is the little world of Don Antonio. And it all began with a row over the statue of St. Joseph. A row that became a rout . . . In the words of Don Antonio:

Such trouble has never come before to San Giuseppe. “It could be that it is purely coincidence we have had this frightful clash, now that Pastor Todaro is here.”

In the words of Pastor Todaro: “I saw a vision on the mountainside. I saw a long road, a hard road. Then a message came to me, You can take the people of San Giuseppe down that road to the promised land. I didn't know we were going to meet the cops on the way. But don't think that will frighten me,” the Pastor went on, “In the last town where I took the gospel, the priest led 500 people to my house one night. They were all yelling outside. The priest came inside and said, “You are preaching blasphemies, Todaro. We'll talk together and settle this for good. Have you got a Bible?”

But I went out on the doorstep and gave them the word . . .”

Before the clash over the statue, Pastor Todaro preached the Protestant word to San Giuseppe in private houses. His biggest audience was 12. A day or so after the clash, he preached in the open air to 200.

It was then that the story went around that if anyone in the village who turned Protestant lost his job, he might find it hard to get another one.

It was just after the villagers started helping Pastor Todaro to build a . . . church—and sent a deputation to tell the bishop that San Giuseppe was turning from Catholicism—that the police served their passport summons to Pastor Todaro.

Said Pastor Todaro: “I would be the last person to suggest the bishop or Don Antonio had asked for court action. They wouldn’t do that. They’re far too clever. They’d get someone else to do it.”

Last word from Don Antonio: “I’m not really interested in Todaro. It is true this village is in a state of some disorder. It is true Todaro is gaining some converts. But what sort of people are they? Ignorant!”

Last word from Pastor Todaro: “We shall see. There is plenty of time. My mission here was for two years. But if the Lord wills it, I shall stay here four years.” (*The Gospel News*, January 1958)

During his stay in Italy, Brother Todaro received much persecution, amongst which was a threatening letter, unsigned by the author. It reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Todaro:

I beg you to leave Mr. Giovanni Botta alone because he is the head of a family and cannot follow a man like you. In the event you shall take the privilege to baptize him, you just wait and see as to what would happen to you when his whole family will turn against you . . . and woe be unto you, if you shall resort to baptize this man. He is in ill health and he cannot expose himself to dampness or water. Do you take the hint? I have no other remark to make except that I will leave it up to you in regard to Mr. Botta, hoping that you will take the warning. My fondest hope is that I may meet you alone someday face to face, that I may be able to square up things with you. It will be the most joyful day of my life . . . when I will be able to get hold of you . . . I now oblige you to pay whatever consequences may result if you persist in your ways: thus you must remain silent.

In spite of these threats, Brother Todaro baptized Mr. Botta with wonderful results. The man recovered from his ailment, and his health became better than before his baptism. As far as it is known, nothing came of the dire threats against our brother, thanks to Our Lord.

On March 11, 1957, incorporation of The Church of Jesus Christ in Italy was accomplished in Rome through the efforts of Attorney Giacomo Rosapepe.

Evangelist Mark Randy - Missionary to Italy

The following part of the history of Italy is taken from the record of Brother Mark Randy, an evangelist of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Never in my ministry did I seriously think that I would go to Italy as a missionary for the Church. In 1958, I was becoming more and more involved in building and developing real estate, and I was doing little for the Kingdom of God.

I had not been feeling well for several months. . . when I was stricken with heart failure that made me drop to the floor at my office. In going to the doctor, he said that it was heart trouble and that I needed rest. I had three more attacks—worse than the first. On August 16, 1958, we had a Conference in Los Angeles. There I was prayed for, but felt no better. A young sister whom I do not know told me, “Why not have faith such as you preach to others?” Those words struck me with such force that it made me begin to pray earnestly before God. On going home, I felt suddenly well. It felt so good not to have that pain in my chest that I said, “Oh, God, if I am really well and you have healed me, I’ll spend at least a year on a mission wherever you want.”

I continued to feel well, so I sent a letter to Brother Cadman with such enthusiasm that I was ready to go immediately, but strange, as it seems, I wrote in August and received no answer until the latter part of October. The answer was that he intended to present my letter at Conference in October but forgot until after the Conference was over. He suggested that I write to the Board of Missions and that they would consider my wishes.

I kind of lost all enthusiasm about it, and I went on with greater endeavor constructing more buildings. In 1959, I signed a contract to construct a shopping center and was making plans to build a nursing home for 36 patients. I received a letter from Brother Cadman in the

latter part of May, saying that if I wanted to still serve on a mission, to write to the Board of Missions and state my wishes. This found me totally unprepared. I did not know what to do, plus the fact that it was the twenty-eighth of May, and the Board would meet on the thirtieth of May. I did not answer.

On the second of June, I received a letter from Rocco Biscotti that the Board of Missions had chosen me to go to Italy as a missionary. That night, I couldn't sleep. My thoughts troubled me because I had promised to go anywhere for one year for the Church, but now I had signed a contract to build a shopping center; and the person interested in the nursing home was very anxious to start as soon as possible.

What must I do? How can I face God or the Church after the way that I had offered myself to serve? How can I face these people who had already made plans.

One night I went to Church; my mind was troubled so much that I asked Brother J. Lovalvo to please let me sit in the congregation. In my heart was a constant prayer for guidance . . . How can I face these people and tell them that I cannot fulfill my contract? Wouldn't they want to be paid for the work they had done? All these thoughts were my constant burden. Suddenly, my mind seemed to be cleared of all such thoughts, and my baptism was before me when I said that I would serve God in spirit and truth.

My evangelist license was before me. What good was that covenant if my choice would be not to go? What good would the evangelist license be if the contracts were more important? . . . I became determined to face these people and to tell them the truth.

The next day, the man and wife of the nursing home came into my home to talk about some changes in the plans. My son, Sam, was making these plans. I told them of my intentions to go after God's affairs first. They were troubled at first, but after a few minutes they both said, "We admire you for your stand." I promised that I would help all I could before I left, and for them to have someone else if they wished. Then I went to the architects of the shopping center and told them that I would pay them for what they had already done. These folks . . . felt a little put out.

I began to work diligently to leave all behind. All were very good to me, and God opened the doors for me to go. My wife felt bad at first, mostly because she was worried about my health, but when she saw my sincerity and determination, she did not stand in my way, for which I am ever grateful.

Brother Randy left home (Modesto, California) for Italy on July 6, 1959. In his journal, he wrote that he was "Very nervous, and did not know whether he would see his family again." Prior to his departure, he stopped in Detroit, Michigan where Brother William H. Cadman and other Church ministers met with him to brief him on the work in Italy. When he inquired whether he would be alone in Italy, he was told that Brother Frank Wooley of Ohio was already there and waiting for him.

The Adventure of Faith Begins

Brother Randy left Detroit on July 16, 1959, and arrived at Reggio Calabria, Italy, where he was met by Brothers Frank Wooley, Dominic Todaro, and Guiseppe LoRicco and LoRicco's wife, Lena LoRicco. Brother Randy's first impression of Italy was one of disappointment because he found very few members. While in Reggio Calabria, he held a few meetings, which encouraged him spiritually. A Sister Catarina Condelle had a dream in which she saw Brother Randy with a beautiful little boy. While looking at them, a voice from heaven spoke, informing her that Mark had come to bring the Restored Gospel. After a few days, he and Brother Wooley left Cannitello, Reggio Calabria to visit the respective missions in Italy.

Their first stop was at San Demetrio Corone where they visited with Brother Giuseppe Buonofiglio and his family, who lived on a farm about three kilometers from the town. They were greeted with joy and enthusiasm, and, although the house was small, were invited to make it their place of abode during their sojourn in San Demetrio.

The next morning (Sunday), they held a meeting with about 50 persons in attendance. The service was blessed by the Holy Spirit, and some had visions to corroborate the missionaries' visit as being the Will of God. They spent two weeks in San Demetrio, preaching and instructing the members concerning the Faith and Doctrine of the Church and instructing the elder relative to his duties and deportment.

Realities of Missionary Work Become Evident

Their next stop was in Buccino where they stayed with Brother Wooley's cousin. The next day they left the cousin's home to contact the local elder, Brother Francesco Lonardo. This brother had once been a Baptist minister. The two missionaries walked 11 kilometers, having to rest periodically until Brother Wooley could no longer go on. Brother Mark wrote that he was "worried about his companion because of his age." Neither Brother Wooley nor he were accustomed to this much walking, being "city dwellers and soft." Nevertheless, they struggled on, until they found Brother Lonardo. He greeted them with a holy kiss, and told them that he was waiting for them because he had a dream the previous night in which he was told that they would arrive that very day.

At 4:00 A.M. the following morning, tired from a sleepless night, they began to wind their way towards San Gregorio, located about six miles away. Brother Mark wrote that Brother Wooley got so weary that he couldn't walk any more. Feeling sorry for the brother's plight, he engaged the services of a donkey; but when he put him on the beast, he was unable to sit on it. Leaving the animal behind, they continued their journey on foot. Because of the rugged terrain, both men's legs were getting progressively weaker. They sat down often, on rocks or on the ground, seeking to regain their strength. Finally, they arrived at their destination. Brother Wooley's sister greeted them warmly and insisted that they stay with her.

The following Sunday morning, the brothers held a meeting in Buccino, and in the evening, preached in San Gregorio. Nine persons asked for their baptism at that meeting. They were confirmed that night, and Sacrament was administered to them.

Remarkable Deliverance from Peril

During one of his trips between Buccino and San Gregorio, Brother Mark had a frightening experience. Returning from San Gregorio one day, he met a young man who told him that he knew a short cut to Buccino. Thinking no evil, Brother Mark followed him, but soon real-

ized that the path led to a lonely road away from everything. Among the many things the young man said, was that “the Americans have much money, and he was so poor.” After a while, they met up with his wife, and the man immediately asked for a hatchet. Very angrily, his wife asked him, “What are you going to do with it?” The young man did not answer. As they continued on their journey, he confessed to Brother Mark that he had intended to rob him. Brother Mark opened his wallet and showed him that he did not have much money. Overcome with remorse, the young man knelt before him and pleaded, “Please do not report me to the police.” After receiving a promise that he would not be reported, the man led him back to the highway where he made a last plea for forgiveness. Brother Mark wrote that he felt no fear but rather felt a powerful touch of the Holy Spirit throughout this encounter.

The following Monday, the brothers departed for Naples to board a ship bound for the Island of Ponza. Upon arriving at Naples, they were informed that no ship was leaving for the Island until the next day. Finding a hotel, they retired without having anything to eat, as they were overcome with exhaustion. The next day, they set sail for Ponza.

Experience about Reconciliation

Arriving at Ponza, they found six members waiting for them but no elder among them. The members desired to have a meeting that night rather than wait until the next day. As the meeting progressed, a young woman [Concentina Darco] walked in with her parents. After being given permission to speak, she said, “I had a dream last night. An angel of God spoke to me and said, ‘Go and reconcile yourself with your neighbor because there will be a service tomorrow at the Church, and they are going to administer Sacrament. You can’t have Sacrament unless you reconcile with your neighbor.’” Experiences like this strengthened the brothers’ resolve to continue their missionary work. The brothers remained in Ponza for a few days, holding meetings and administering the Lord’s Supper. They encouraged the saints with the Word of God and then departed for Reggio Calabria.

While abiding in Cannitello, Reggio Calabria, they wrote an extensive report to the General Church regarding their missionary work. "However," wrote Brother Randy, "they were very disappointed to receive no acknowledgment of their report."

Shortly afterwards, the two brothers departed for Cinisi, Sicily, to visit some of Brother Randy's relatives. To their immense pleasure, they were received with great joy. Brother Randy not only gave his testimony to his relatives but also held several meetings with them; seven in Cinisi and one in Castellamare. He sensed, however, that not much good was accomplished, realizing that a missionary must remain in a vicinity for an extended period of time in order to achieve any spiritual success.

They returned to the San Demetrio Corone area and visited with Brother Joseph Ignagni, who resided in a small town called Fresinone. (Brother Ignagni and his wife had returned to Italy from the U.S. to abide there permanently.) They held meetings with the Ignagnis and a few friends, but again the realization struck forcibly that a missionary must remain a long time in an area to see his labors come to fruition.

Missionaries Instrumental in Healings

They returned to San Demetrio where they found three families in litigation over a small piece of property. Their first attempt for a reconciliation was a disappointment, so they appointed a day of prayer for the Lord's intervention. When they met on the appointed day, they found a different atmosphere among the parties involved. The Lord had given the three principals an almost identical dream. Because of this revelation, there was a complete reconciliation. God had accomplished the work for the two brothers. The settlement of their differences resulted in one of the litigants asking for his baptism.

From time to time the brothers enjoyed the healing powers of God. One night, while sleeping at Brother Dominic Todaro's house, they heard the cry of a little girl who lived next door. Unable to endure the child's whimpering, Brother Wooley arose from his bed and went to the child's home. He knocked on the door until the father opened it and gruffly

asked, "What do you want?" "Give me the child," responded Brother Wooley. The man retorted, "What are you going to do with her?" "I am going to pray to my God to heal her; I cannot stand to hear her cry any longer," replied our brother. Angrily the father said, "You leave us alone." While this exchange of words was going on, the mother of the child came out with the little girl and said to her husband, "These are men of God; they can heal our child." She then gave the girl to Brother Wooley, who took the child in his arms, and with a loud voice cried out, "O Lord, our God, show these unbelievers that You are a living Being. Heal this child now." Immediately, the little girl stopped crying and went to sleep. The next morning, she was playing outside with other children.

During their stay in San Demetrio, Brother Frank Wooley became very ill and had to be attended to by a physician. According to Brother Mark's journal, both brothers were constantly in ill health, first one, then another, and at times, they were stricken simultaneously. They showed much courage by remaining in the missionary field under those trying circumstances.

Brother Buonofiglio Accompanies Brother Randy

Calamity struck again while Brother Wooley was sick. The police came to the house to arrest Brother Wooley and deport him to America. Immediately, Brother Mark went to the Commissioner of Police to investigate the matter but was treated very impolitely and called a liar when he told the Commissioner that Brother Wooley was sick. Without hesitation, Brother Mark addressed the Commissioner, "Is it the law in Italy to call a man a liar before he is found guilty of lying? The Italian law reads that a man accused is guilty until he is found innocent, but even with this law, who is our accuser, and what are the charges, seeing that Frank Wooley has neither broken any laws nor has he indulged in any propaganda. Also, no accusers have laid any charges against him." The Commissioner replied, "It was not I who ordered Signore Wooley home, but the order came from a higher authority than I: Rome and the priest."

The Commissioner relented and permitted Brother Wooley to remain in Italy until his health improved. The police had detained Brother Wooley's passport beyond the expiration date, thus giving him only 24 hours to leave Italy. It broke the man's heart when he was told to leave Italy. Sad and weary, he returned to America on October 14, 1959, leaving Brother Randy as the lone missionary in that part of the world. Brother Frank Wooley's departure was a great loss to Brother Mark and to the members in Italy. In Brother Wooley's stead, Brother Guiseppe Buonofiglio became his traveling companion.

At this time, Brother Mark bought Brother Todaro's automobile and, after making the needed repairs, the two brothers drove off, arriving in Foggia, where a few members resided. They held meetings every night, encouraging the saints to keep faithful and strong in the Lord. Brother Mark records that it rained every day, accompanied by severely cold weather. "I just couldn't keep warm," he wrote. "I bought a heavy sweater and put on two pairs of socks. There was no heat in the houses where we stayed."

They next departed for Vicenza, near Venice, to visit Brother Emilio Milano. There they found that the priests of the city had intimidated him and his family so much that he refrained from confessing his belief in The Church of Jesus Christ lest he would lose his job. In that period of time, there was not the freedom of religion as in the following years, when Italy became, by law, more tolerant of other religions besides Catholicism. Over the year the persecutions and threats have lessened somewhat. During our brothers travels, however, persecution was constant.

After a short visit with Brother Milano, they departed for Rome to visit with Brother Mark's cousins. Upon their arrival, they chanced to meet a Pentecostal Minister who invited them to stay at his house. Shortly afterward, they took their leave of this hospitable man and went to bid farewell to Mark's cousins. As they left to drive away, Brother Mark noticed that the trunk lid of the car was open and all of his suitcases containing his clothes were gone, including a movie camera, film, personal letters, the charter of the Church in Italy, and the medicine for his

heart. He went to the Police to report it, but received a curt reply, "In Italy, we have misery;" as if to say that he should expect such things.

Their next stop was Ponza. The trip by boat was so rough that it made the brothers very ill. Despite their weariness, upon their arrival they held two meetings, which were gloriously blessed. While there, they renewed to fellowship Brother and Sister Onorato, who had been undutiful for a long time.

Leaving Ponza and arriving in Fornia, they picked up their car and departed for Buccino. When they arrived, they were joyfully met by Brother Lonardo. Since there was only one room in Brother Lonardo's home, the brothers went to a hotel in town. Again they were exposed to heatless rooms and no toilet facilities. Their blankets never seemed to be enough; and they slept wearing wool sweaters and stockings. They were thankful, nonetheless, that the Holy Spirit gave them strength to endure these discomforts.

Despite the physical annoyance, they held a meeting in Buccino at 9:00 A.M. and in San Gregorio Magno in the evening. God blessed the two missionaries, who, forgetting their miseries, preached and taught in the strength of the Lord. Brother Mark wrote that the need for permanent missionaries is everywhere in Italy. One man cannot do the work by himself. "I do not know where to divide myself as the need is everywhere, so I keep visiting all of them until I see that they are able to help themselves."

Another Experience of Divine Protection

Brother Mark had a remarkable experience while in San Gregorio. He wrote:

The Spirit of God spoke to me to leave and go to San Demetrio. We would not have left until the next day, but I was strongly urged to leave immediately. I am thankful because it is now the third day of fog and soft rain and snow in high elevations. We made it to San Demetrio just in time. I thank God for His guiding hand because visibility is about zero for the third day now. Storms have killed 11 persons in Cosenza and in Catanzaro. This destruction is the worst of this nature,

they say. Hundreds of precious acreage of good soil has been washed to sea. Railroads have been broken and disrupted. In France, a dam broke, washing away an entire town. More than 300 were reported to have died... Somehow, I have been protected, and wherever I have been, the storm was there before me or came after I left. I was miraculously warned to leave, and immediately after our arrival, terrific torrents of rain poured down.

Brother Mark experienced afflictions, despair, loneliness, homesickness, hope, exultation, strength, and weakness; a variety of emotions. His wife, Mary, was troubled about his health and welfare, and, consequently, wrote to him several times pleading that he return home immediately. Something within Brother Mark could not let him abandon the brothers and sisters in Italy. He felt that he must remain a while longer. Christmas 1959 was a lonely time for him, away from his family and alone in a land far from home.

Nevertheless, determined to finish his labors, he went to Cinisi, Sicily, and held meetings, albeit the people were not responsive to his message. While struggling with discouragement, he received a letter from Apostle Anthony A. Corrado from America that lifted his spirits greatly. The next night, while preaching to the people, a young man asked to be baptized. A wonderful feeling enveloped him as he took the man to the river to baptize him. As he was immersing the young man, he suddenly remembered that this was the same spot where, at the age of 15, Brother Mark had almost lost his life. Now, after so many years, he would bring a soul to "die in sin." This thought rejuvenated him completely.

Soon afterwards, in the company of Brother Todaro, he traveled to Ponza, San Gregorio, and Buccino, holding meetings at each place, and enjoying God's blessings. In San Gregorio, they baptized a young girl and ordained two brothers elders, one named Trimarco, and the other Funzi.

Their departure the next day, January 14, 1960, was heart-rending. The people wept, and some gave them presents. One boy brought a chicken and gave it to Brother Mark. Surprised, he asked the boy what was he to do with the chicken. The boy simply answered, "My mother

thought that, where you are going, there may not be any meat for you.” Of course, Brother Mark could not take it, but the gift of love brought tears to his eyes.

Conversion of Pentecostal Minister

They departed for Cannitello, Reggio Calabria where Brother Mark left the automobile in care of Brother Todaro and went to Cinisi, Sicily. Two days later, he returned to Reggio, to a place called San Fantino where he held a few meetings with a Pentecostal group. He spoke freely about The Book of Mormon. The first night, all but one person wanted to be baptized. That night Brother Mark had a dream in which he saw Brother William H. Cadman giving Domenico Folduto (the Pentecostal minister) two books. The rest of the congregation wanted them also. He told them that theirs would come later.

Brother Mark baptized Domenico Folduto and Natale Zumbi. He also ordained Brothers Giuseppe LoRicco and Domenico Folduto elders of The Church of Jesus Christ. Shortly afterwards, he baptized several more persons. A few years later, Brother LoRicco was ordained an evangelist. He was also put in charge of the work in Italy. The parent Church in America aided him financially in his visits to the various Missions in Italy.

He then left for Cinisi, where he ordained Brother Guiseppi Giacobelli. Brother Mark left Italy on January 31, 1960, arriving home safely and welcomed by his family amidst joy and tears. In his journal, Brother Mark reminisces often about Italy, his visits, the blessings, the hardships, the baptisms, and the love that filled the hearts of those who accepted the Restored Gospel.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA

An historical era began when a letter written by a Mr. A. A. Dick, on August 10, 1953, was received by President William H. Cadman, requesting that The Church of Jesus Christ be established in Nigeria. Mr.

Dick was the leader of a group of church people known as the "Holiness Christian Church" in Nigeria, West Africa. Brother Cadman was filled with great expectations—as he expressed later—in envisioning the Church's being established in a foreign country.

The excitement was electrifying in the assembled priesthood as the letter was read at the October 1953 General Church Conference. The request was thoroughly discussed, with many opinions being given on the feasibility of sending missionaries to Nigeria. The discussion terminated with a motion to hold a special priesthood meeting on November 14, 1953 for further deliberation on the matter.

During the discussion at this November assembly, Brother William H. Cadman volunteered to go to Nigeria to investigate the possibilities of establishing the Church there. Some discouraging comments were presented because of Brother Cadman's age and what affect the unknown climatic conditions would have on him physically. But he was undaunted and affirmative in his response, "God will take care of me." Accordingly, the Priesthood appointed him to go to Nigeria and investigate the possibilities of establishing The Church of Jesus Christ in that country. Brother Cadman then selected Brother Joseph Bittinger to be his fellow missionary.

Prior to leaving for Nigeria, Brother Cadman received a letter from A. A. Dick's wife, which seemed to further stimulate his desire to leave on this foreign mission. The letter was short but very encouraging. She wrote:

I thank the Lord who brings us to you in one affiliation with The Church of Jesus Christ. I am glad to tell you that I am teaching in one of the Churches of Jesus Christ Schools, and should be grateful if you could send Gospel News Monthly and twelve English Bibles to be given out to my pupils who ask for same.

I am the wife to the General Superintendent Rev. Amiete A. A. Dick. Please greet your wife for me and all others. Amen. Yours in Christ, Mrs. A. Dick

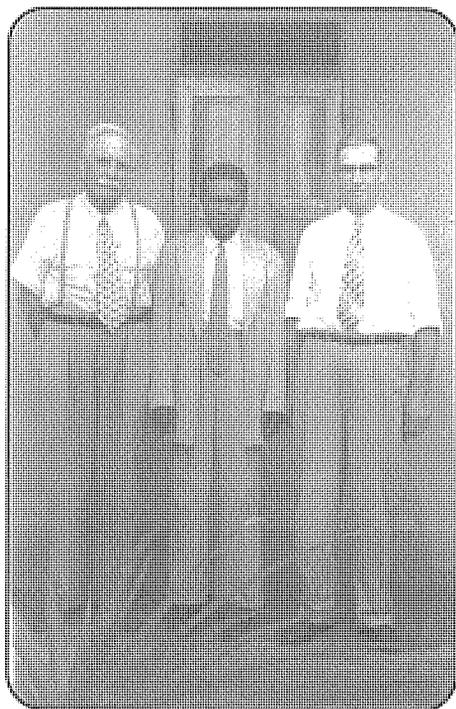
On August 4, 1954, Brothers William H. Cadman and Joseph Bittinger left for Nigeria. After some delays, both in the United States and

in London, England, the two brothers arrived in Nigeria where they eventually established The Church of Jesus Christ. In a meeting held purposely to greet the missionaries, a “Welcome Address” was presented to the brothers, which was, according to Brother Bittinger, a “masterpiece in composition.” Part of the “Address” reads, “We feel very happy to receive you into our midst on this your first missionary visit to Calabar. We thank God that He has made it possible for you to come among us in order that you may do the great commission of the Great Master Jesus Christ. Your commission is not to give us your tradition, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” (Joseph Bittinger’s Autobiography)

Shortly thereafter, they baptized A. A. Dick and many others, thus establishing The Church of Jesus Christ in Nigeria. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they continued their missionary endeavors with great anticipation. While in the area of Ikot Ebak and Abak, the two missionaries baptized 285 persons. They ordained Brother Dick and others elders, and some were ordained teachers, deacons, and deaconesses.

Abak became the headquarters of the Church in Nigeria. Brothers Cadman and Bittinger often said that this missionary trip was the most exciting of all their endeavors. They had never been involved in baptizing so many people in such a short time.

The two missionaries were overwhelmed by the wonderful reception they received by the people in Nigeria. Although very poor, they showed



Wm H. Cadman, A.A. Dick, Joseph Bittinger

their love by showering them with such as bananas, oranges, live chickens, a goat, sheep, and various foodstuffs. Many times, the brothers gave much of their food to the indigent persons around them, thus sharing in love what was given in love.

A rather unique event happened while the two brothers were in their place of abode. Five policemen arrived unexpectedly. According to the brothers, "They were clothed in the finery of their native dress. Their appearance was of superior quality, portraying a very colorful sight. They were young men, probably around 25 or 30 years of age. . . . These five policemen had come to ask us if we would bless them and pray for them. We invited them into our room. They all stood reverently with bowed heads. Brother Cadman and I both offered prayer for them. They were satisfied, mounted their bicycles, and went their way." (Joseph Bittinger's *Autobiography*)

Although the results of the missionary endeavors were successful beyond their expectations, the brothers encountered some adverse moments. Their living quarters were not as they were accustomed to in America, but they accepted this small inconvenience as intrepid missionaries. Brother Bittinger became ill for a few days, but recovered quite well. While in Nigeria, he also suffered a sprained back, which hindered his activities to a degree. Brother Cadman's health seemed to hold up very well.

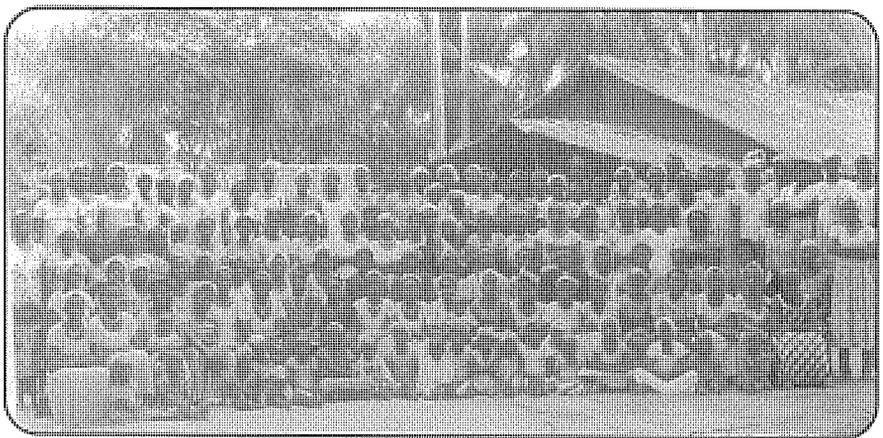
While at Calabar, burglars robbed the brothers of practically everything they had: clothing, gifts, passports, suitcases, plane tickets, and health certificates. Fortunately, Brother Bittinger had enough clothes to share with brother Cadman. None of the stolen articles were recovered. They had to wait patiently to acquire the necessary items to permit them to return to the United States. Although deeply disturbed by the robbery, they were thankful to the Almighty that no attempt was made to injure them. They also realized that missionary endeavors are often clouded with unexpected troubles. The evil forces are always arrayed against those who are attempting to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially in foreign lands. In the month of September 1954, the two brothers left

Nigeria for the United States, and upon their arrival, they were welcomed with great joy by their families and members of the Church.

The first conference of The Church of Jesus Christ in Nigeria was held at Ikot Ebak-Abak on March 5-6, 1955, with 480 persons attending. Brother O. Akpan, who wrote about this event says, "We had a \$60 offering, but not all the churches attended the Conference. At this time, we were still 70 groups with 2,038 souls baptized." (*The Gospel News*, January 1956, p. 2)

On June 2-4, 1955, another conference was held at Efoi-Eket which was, in the words of Brother Akpan, "the most wonderful conference which we have had—570 attended. The offering was \$200. Four hundred partook of the Lord's Table [Supper]: teachers, deacons, and deaconesses were ordained. We were . . . 79 groups, 2,500 souls were baptized." (*The Gospel News*, January 1956, p. 2)

Among the subjects discussed at this conference, an announcement was made by Brother Dick that "The Church of Jesus Christ does not believe in signs of the cross, candles, taking Palm wine, using tobacco, etc., and that any group affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ who will be found guilty of these things, their names will be removed from our list." (*The Gospel News*, January 1956, p. 2)



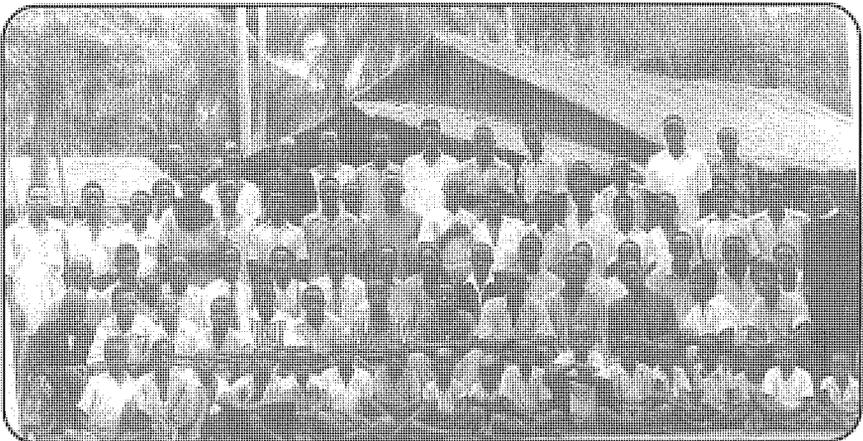
Women Church Members at Nung Ata

On the following September 22-24, another conference was held at Ikot Akpa Edung, with 845 persons attending. The Church in Nigeria now had 84 groups (or Missions). Brother Akpan, writing to the parent Church in the United States, gives a short account of the progress of the Church in Nigeria:

There was no place for the elders to sleep, all were sleeping in the church, also the superintendent was sleeping in the church. People were asking when the missionaries will come; some were throwing evil words upon us. The work grows more and more. In 1932, we were in the Holiness Christian Church. We did not rejoice, nor did we receive any blessings, nor did the work of the Mission progress as it is now. If I could refer to the history of our Mission written by brother Dick since 1932 to 1955, I may say there is a great difference in the progress of the work than it was before.

Brethren, awake, and help; if you cannot send a helping hand, your daily prayer could help by remembering the missionaries' work of Brothers W. H. Cadman and Joseph Bittinger in Nigeria. Pray daily that we remain faithful. (*The Gospel News*, January 1956, p. 2)

The brothers in Nigeria kept in constant touch with the parent Church in the United States. The following letter by A. A. Dick was sent to Brother W. H. Cadman, asking that it be printed in *The Gospel News*.



Men Church Members at Nung Ata

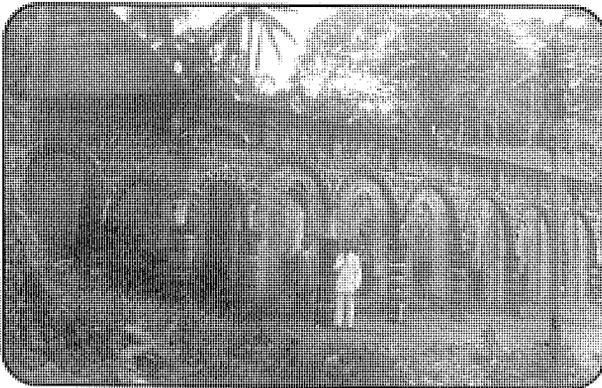
MY TRIP TO EFFOI: It was on March 1st 1955 I received a call from the above village. I [traveled] with Pastor, C. E. Otu, an elder of The Church of Jesus Christ. This call was made by the Villages Chiefs. From my home to Effoi is 99 miles.

... The Chiefs told me that they have never been in a Church before, and that was the first time they attended the Church. They asked me to tell them the Word of Christ. In the morning about 4 A.M. they beat the drum and their village's hall was over crowded.

I first addressed them on how God used Joseph Smith, and how the Church was established. . . .

... I also told them . . . that we baptized for remission of sins. . . . All of them rejoiced. . . . I baptized 21 of them with the assistance of Brother. C. E. Otu.

One man by [the] name of Samuel Udotal Bassey . . . I baptized him and ordained him a deacon. He gave me his biography and the establishing of his missions as shown as follows. A. A. Dick. (*The Gospel News*, July 1955, p. 3)



Cadman Memorial Church,
only concrete building in Nigeria, 1955

Brother Bassey's Testimony:

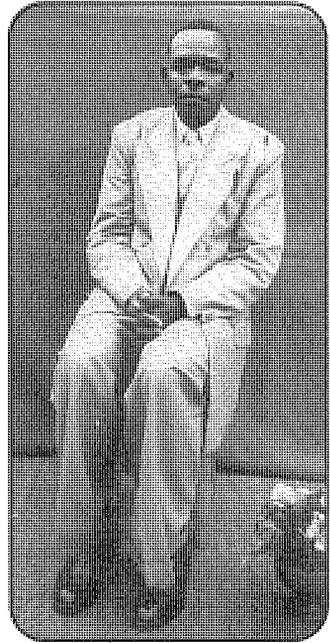
In his brief autobiography, Brother Bassey tells of being born a son of a Chief at a village called Effoi at Eket in the Calabar Province of southern Nigeria. He says that he was hated by his brothers, and, at the death of his father, his mother took him away in fear of his life.

He says that, after their flight, they were in constant danger. In the interim, he contracted rheumatism from which he suffered constant pain until, through much prayer, the Lord healed him. From that time onward, he devoted himself to a life of prayer.

He attended his church regularly and was baptized in 1913. He had no academic qualifications, and the only education he received was in reading and writing, which he obtained at a village school where he also learned to read the Bible in his native tongue, Efik. In 1924, he was appointed as a local preacher of the Gospel at Atabong Church of the Qua Iboe Mission.

He married in 1931, and shortly afterwards, both he and his wife became very ill, suffering from "strong heat and an internal burning." They spent their time and money visiting both black and white doctors for relief, but to no avail. After seven years of suffering, his wife told him that they must stop going to earthly physicians and turn to the Lord for help. Within three years, they were both healed.

Brother Bassey tells how he and others met to pray and read the Bible. During that time, they received an experience to call their group "The Church of Christ." In process of time, he met with Pastor C.A.O Essien who told him about The Church of Jesus Christ in the United States, which instilled in Brother Bassey a desire to affiliate himself and his group with the one overseas. He praised the Lord for giving his group the same name eleven years before he was told about The Church of Jesus Christ. He was eventually baptized and later was ordained an elder at the Conference held at Effoi-Ekat on September 2-4, 1955.



Samuel U. Bassey

A letter by Elder N. Akpan, and printed in *The Gospel News*, September 1955, reported on the progress in Nigeria. He asked the parent Church to pray for those in Ikot Ebak (Headquarters of the Church) that they may grow in faithfulness, holiness, spiritual life, and the spirit of obedience.

He wrote that the building where the missionaries from the United States will live is finished and awaiting their arrival. He also stated that they had baptized another 19 persons and ordained Brother J. Essiet an elder. They had organized prayer meetings every night in the compounds.

At Abak, another church building was completed by the members, and, although Brother Akpan apologized for having only 40 members whom he baptized, they continued to preach and serve communion.

At a meeting sponsored by the Nigerian Ladies' Circle, Brother A. A. Dick reviewed the establishing of The Church of Jesus Christ in Nigeria by Brothers W. H. Cadman and Joseph Bittinger on August 14, 1954 and asked the sisters to call that day "Restoration Day." "Because," he said, "The Church of Jesus Christ was restored to us in this month of the year. . ." From that day on, August 14th has been known as "Restoration Day."

A. A. Dick came to the United States at the expense of the Church, arriving on May 1, 1956. Brother Dick was treated very cordially by the Church and received financial donations from the various Branches and Missions that he visited, plus donations from many individuals.

During his stay in the U. S. A., he was authorized to incorporate the Church in Nigeria. Shortly afterwards, he departed for home.

On June 1957, Brother Dick incorporated the Church with the Nigerian government, but in doing so, he failed to insert in the document that the Headquarters of The Church was in Monongahela, Pennsylvania.



Rachel Arthur, Ladies' Circle President in Nigeria

nia, U.S. A. The incorporation instrument recorded—erroneously—that Ikot Ebok, Abak was the headquarters, thus making the Church an African entity instead of being a subsidiary of the parent Church in the United States of America.

Whether Brother A. A. Dick did this mistakenly or by design is not known. Nevertheless, the Nigerian government did not legally recognize the parent Church. It appears that shortly after this, A. A. Dick became alienated from the parent Church. (John Ross, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ in Nigeria*)

In the interim, reports began filtering down to the parent Church that situations in the Nigerian Church were less than favorable. In consequence thereof, the General Church priesthood authorized Brothers Joseph Bittinger and Alma Nolfi to go to Nigeria and investigate these matters.

On January 14, 1958, the two brothers left for Nigeria and, upon their arrival at Abak, they began their investigation of the adverse conditions in the Church. After two months, the brothers were compelled to leave Nigeria sooner than they had anticipated because of the unfavorable state of the Church brought about by A. A. Dick and other officers of the Nigerian Church.

In his autobiography, Brother Bittinger reports that A. A. Dick was guilty of many misdemeanors, lying, cheating, putting the parent Church's money in his name and withdrawing it completely. His honesty and motives were questioned by both members and non-members. He worked against the brothers, constantly presenting insurmountable opposition. The brothers were baffled by his deportment. Most of the elders and officers in charge of the satellite Missions expressed their displeasure with Brother Dick in one manner or another. Their complaints were numerous, and they desired to be free from the tyrannical control he exercised over them. Brothers Bittinger and Nolfi were powerless to make any changes, as they felt that, upon their departure, Brother Dick and his supporters would enforce their will upon the people.

The brothers concluded that the only solution to correct the problem which A. A. Dick had created was to have permanent missionaries go to Nigeria, authorizing them to take whatever steps were necessary to restore the Church and appoint godly men to oversee it with administrative and spiritual leadership.

Despite A. A. Dick's duplicity, Brothers Bittinger and Nolfi had many days of rejoicing. They preached the Gospel to hundreds of persons, baptizing many of them. They were received cordially wherever they went, the people opening their hearts at the welcome message of the Restored Gospel. On March 1958, the two brothers left for the United States.

At the General Church Conference in April 1959, the parent Church established a permanent Missionary Board to oversee the Mission fields of the Church. At that conference, The Church asked for two volunteers to go to Nigeria to attempt to restore the administrative and spiritual order, which had been disrupted by Brother Dick and his followers. Brothers John Ross and Alvin Swanson answered the call to become missionaries to Nigeria.

(The following portion of this history is taken from the accounts of Brothers Ross and Swanson.)

When the two brothers applied for visas, they were denied these documents because A. A. Dick wrote letters to the Nigerian Immigration Department saying that they were not wanted in Nigeria. He, Dick, also wrote to the Pennsylvania State Police Department in the United States, notifying them to stop the two brothers from going to Nigeria. This was verified by the State Police, who went to Brother John Ross's home and showed him the letter.

After applying many times for visas with the Consulate General of Nigeria, the two missionaries were granted these documents in May 1960. Brothers Ross and Swanson left for Nigeria on May 23, 1960, arriving at Lagos, Nigeria on May 25, 1960. Because of the evil machinations of A.

A. Dick, the two brothers were not permitted to go to the Eastern Region and were compelled to remain in Lagos until June 11, 1960.

In the interim, the brethren in the Eastern Region, supported by about 10,000 persons, suggested to the missionaries that they remain in Lagos until matters would be cleared up with the Eastern Region Immigration Authorities. This group had previously written to the parent Church in the United States of America, with the intent to join The Church of Jesus Christ. According to Brother Ross, these people were known as the Nazarenes. The leader of this large group, G. U. Umoh, was instrumental in persuading the Eastern Region Immigration Authorities to allow Brothers Ross and Swanson to enter the Eastern Region.

While waiting patiently and prayerfully in Lagos (the Western Region), the two brothers eventually received official notice permitting them to go into the Eastern Region. On June 11, 1960, they left Lagos by automobile, and arrived at Ikot Ekpene on June 12, 1960. There they were received warmly by G. U. Umoh's son-in-law, Sunny S. Akpaidiok, who offered his home as their temporary living quarters.

After three days, on June 15, a large delegation of Nazarene Church Officers escorted Brothers Ross and Swanson to Enugu, the Capital of the Eastern Region, to meet with the Minister of Internal Affairs regarding permission to stay in the Eastern Region. The reason for this meeting was that the Eastern Region Government had previously advised the Immigration Office in Lagos to deny visas to the two brothers and impede their entering their Region. According to Brother Ross's account, all of this trouble was because of A. A. Dick's animosity against The Church of Jesus Christ.

After inspecting the brothers' visas and passports, the Permanent Secretary of Internal Affairs (J. R. Duncan) informed them that they were at liberty to visit anywhere in Nigeria as the visas indicated Nigeria and not any specific region in Nigeria. Sighing with great relief and thanksgiving, the brothers, who had waited prayerfully for this good news, humbly concluded that God still works in mysterious ways. Only by Divine intervention had they been set free to consummate their mission.

Immediately afterwards, the two brothers, with renewed vigor, began their work of recovering as many churches (missions) as possible that did not favor A. A. Dick and wanted no more affiliation with him or his group. Many of the Missions that still considered themselves to be part of The Church of Jesus Christ had become disorganized. Brothers Ross and Swanson informed them that they had come to Nigeria to help them; and all those people who wanted to return to the parent Church were welcomed, providing they adhered to the Faith and Doctrine and the Law and Order of the parent Church.

Those who returned were first instructed by the two missionaries to write letters of resignation to A. A. Dick, informing him that they were no longer associated with his church but were now affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ, with Headquarters in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, U. S. A. Without these letters of resignation, the two missionaries could have been arrested as trespassers and impostors.

While endeavoring to restore those who had gone with A. A. Dick, Brothers Ross and Swanson also met with the leaders of the Nazarene Church at Obio Utu in Abak, its Headquarters. The leaders of this church had titles of manager, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Most prominent among their leaders were G. U. Umoh (manager), Jonah U. Udo, Etim Ebong, and E. U. A. Arthur. The brothers spent a lot of time teaching these leaders about the Faith and Doctrine, Law and Order, The Book of Mormon, and other important matters about The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Alvin Swanson writes that on Friday morning, May 27, two young men knocked at their door and told the brothers that they had been informed that they were missionaries and would like to hear of their doctrine. These young men were in their early twenties. One of them, Adrian Etim, was a schoolteacher of the Catholic faith. After reading The Book of Mormon where it states that there will be only two churches in the future, his mind was illuminated and for that reason he was seeking further explanation. The brothers spent a few hours with them, much to their delight.

In addition, while speaking with a Mr. David Ayeni, the manager of the hotel where they were staying, they were told that he knew Brother William H. Cadman, whom he called "Papa." He also told them that he had taken Brother Cadman to visit some of his people, who numbered about 250.

On May 28, the two missionaries traveled into the jungle until they arrived at a village. They were met by the young schoolteacher, Adrian Etim, who had a welcoming program prepared for them. The schoolhouse where they were taken had no doors or windows. Some of the boys sang a hymn under Etim's direction, and then some little girls, ranging from seven to ten years old, danced, depicting paganism in a den of sin. Brother Swanson recalls that he never had seen "such shaking in all his life." He also writes, "There is going to be an all-night dance under our hotel window, so probably I won't get much sleep tonight."

Brother Swanson records that he baptized U. G. Umoh in a stream and confirmed him a member of the Church. Next Brother Ross washed Brother Umoh's feet, anointed him with oil and ordained him an elder of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Prior to the arrival of Brothers Ross and Swanson, A. A. Dick had taken Brother Umoh and his wife into a bathroom and baptized them by pouring water over their heads. When they protested, Dick attempted to convince them that "this kind of baptism is all right." But the husband and wife were never satisfied, and, as a result, Brother Umoh would never baptize anyone although he had a license from the Church in America. Brothers Ross and Swanson felt that Brother Umoh was a "noble man" and that they would never forget him.

On June 3, Brother Alvin Swanson was taken to a hospital, suffering with pains in his stomach and dysentery. Chills and fever racked his body mercilessly. Brother Ross anointed him, and eventually the fever broke. He was in the hospital until June 8, 1960. Malaria had struck our brother. Because their finances were dwindling, Brother Swanson's concern was that the hospital bill would be so great that they would have to cancel their proposed trip to the Eastern Region. When they went to the hospi-

tal to pay the bill, they were told to wait while the bill was being calculated. Meanwhile, the two brothers prayed that the Lord would help them in this dire situation. It took three hours for the hospital to trace the bill; but their surprise and delight knew no bounds when the man in charge took them aside and told them that, "Since you are men of God, and your only livelihood is your keep in Nigeria, it will only cost you \$8.90." Surely, God was in the matter!

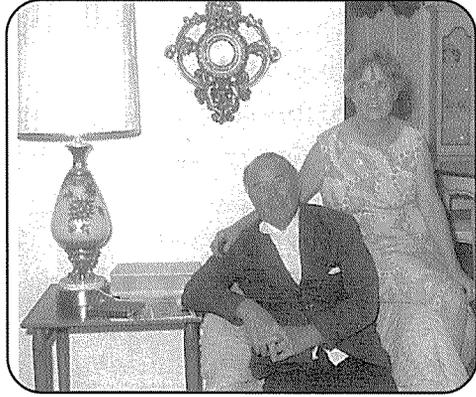
On June 10, the two missionaries wrote to Brother Cadman and his counselors, asking them to silence A. A. Dick until the forthcoming Conference and then suspend him from the Church. This action would help the brothers to defeat Dick's evil purposes.

The two missionaries experienced many things, some serious and some with a touch of humor. A man from Ikotun, named Ezekiel Agabi desired to be baptized. The brothers took him into the "bush" and baptized him. Many Moslems watched the baptism and laughed at what was being done. When they attempted to explain, the Moslems mocked them and said it "couldn't be understood." On their way home, the brothers saw two JuJus (witch doctors). Brother Swanson writes, "This beats any movies on Africa."

When they arrived in their room, Brother Ezekiel was confirmed by the laying on of hands. When Brother Swanson asked his age, Ezekiel replied that it could be around 45, but he had no idea of the month or day, so Brother Swanson gave him a birth date. Since his spiritual birth was June 10, 1960, his natural birthday would be June 10, 1915.

Brother Swanson writes that, "As we travel from Lagos into the 'bush,' the heat is unbearable, hunger assails us as we ride all day, and fatigue overtakes us to the point of exhaustion." They reached their destination, got a room in a combination hotel-motel, and finally had something to eat. The food eased some of their fatigue, but only rest could rejuvenate their bodies. Although they went to bed, they couldn't sleep. There were playing and singing outside of their window by a native orchestra, and it went on for hours.

Brother Alvin Swanson has a marvelous talent for describing his surroundings. He sees beauty where others see only bleakness; he sees hope where others see gloom; he sees victory where others see failure; in the midst of unbearable heat, rain, or discomfort, he sees the sun behind the clouds. He writes, "The bush here is beautiful.



Alvin and Viola Swanson

There are flowers everywhere. We are sitting on a balcony, writing up among the treetops. It is refreshing and cool. My sickness has left me entirely. If ever there was an Eden in the jungle, then we have found it here. The Lord has provided us with everything we need."

On Sunday, June 19, Brothers Ross and Swanson went to a Church service in Obio Uru. When they arrived at the church, they found hymns being sung and clapping of hands to the beat of drums. The collection event was very unique. Everyone forms a line and, to the beating of drums, dance to the back of the building, turn a corner, come on toward the front and, without losing step or rhythm, drop a penny in the collection box, and then dance back to their seats. The astounding thing about all this is that some women nurse their babies as they dance in line, but this apparent handicap does not break their rhythm.

The brothers' schedule was rigid and unending. From morning until late at night, they traveled in the bush, witnessing for Christ, baptizing hundreds of people, anointing the sick, and ordaining elders at different villages, as the Holy Spirit directed them. They were treated with respect wherever they went, and gifts were always given to them.

At a meeting held in one of the compounds, the Spirit of the Lord warned the brothers that something dreadfully wrong was transpiring. They asked all the officers to remain after the meeting to question them.

The result of the inquiry revealed that they were practicing polygamy. Immediately, their Sacrament was stopped. The presiding elder pleaded with the brothers to excuse him, but his entreaty fell upon deaf ears. The deacon defied them, saying he would not put away his extra wives as it would make harlots of them. Brother Swanson replied, "The way they are living already labels them as harlots."

Brother Swanson records, "It was a terrible shock to my nature; I am filled with loathing and disgust. I am looking at ugliness and for possible criticisms and repercussions. I am sorry that it was our lot to bring such things to light. It was one of the main issues in the downfall of the Early Church; now it has raised its ugly head again."

The next day, they visited Samson Akpan and questioned him concerning the polygamous practice among the Church people. He replied in amazement that, "No one had ever told him that he should have only one wife." Although Brother Akpan was not guilty of this abominable practice, the majority of his membership was. He was given the unpleasant task of separating all those who were living in an adulterous condition from the Church. He gasped at this order and left in a disconsolate mood, for he had to separate many of his members. Apparently, the two missionaries had to correct the practice of polygamy in other places where the Church had been established. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must transcend the cultures and traditions of people everywhere in the world.

On Sunday, August 7, after a meeting held at Itienan, Brother Jacob Akpan, the presiding elder of that Mission, asked Brother Swanson whether he was the missionary whom they had been waiting for. Immediately, Brother Swanson showed him his ministerial credentials, which satisfied Brother Jacob. He had a good reason to take this precaution. At one time, A. A. Dick had invited some Mennonite ministers from America and then called a special meeting of all the surrounding Branches where he introduced these missionaries as being sent by Brother William H. Cadman. When they asked A. A. Dick about the name "Mennonite," Dick told them that Brother Cadman had changed the name of The Church.

On Monday, August 8, the largest conclave of elders was held. About 250 delegates attended, all representing the Nazarene Church. The meeting lasted three and a half hours, and was very stormy, according to our two brothers. Approximately two months prior to this large session, the Nazarene Officers had agreed unanimously to join The Church of Jesus Christ. Now, the details had to be fine-tuned and implemented.

These people decided to take down all the Nazarene signs and put up ones with the name of The Church of Jesus Christ on them. They also terminated their Bible Schools, pending the opening of new ones, to teach the doctrine of the Church. However, there was a problem. They were anxious to have a secondary school system, which the children attend after graduating from the fifth grade. At this time, the Church was not in a position to help in this matter. A few years later, this was accomplished.

There was also another problem: a paid ministry. The Nazarene elders still wanted their "chop" (money for food, etc.), but our brothers would not yield to their demands. They responded that "it was the first time Nigeria had had anyone try to destroy their tradition." Our brothers countered with the observation that they would not "change the law of Christ for all of Nigeria." The Nazarene elders told our brothers that every other faith gives their pastors their "chop." Again our brothers parried with, "Why don't you go to them and get your free 'chop' if that is what you want?" They could not understand nor accept that The Church of Jesus Christ does not have a paid ministry.

On Monday, August 27, our brothers met with the Nazarene elders, and the same question of pay for preaching arose. This time, however, they yielded to the explanation of the Church's views on the matter, with the result that they wanted to receive our Gospel unconditionally. What an exulting joy sprung within the hearts of our brothers! They set a date of Monday, September 5, to baptize all who desired to join our Church. The potential was staggering. There were about 10,000 in that group.

At this juncture, Brother Swanson records a marvelous experience received by a certain Jacob Ikpe. "While I was speaking, Jacob saw a

heavenly person standing beside me, writing names in a book; and when he finished writing, he closed the book, and, pulling open a drawer in the table by which I was standing, deposited the book there and closed the drawer. Then he vanished.” This was an encouraging experience for our brothers.

On the date appointed, our brothers went to Utu Abak, the place of baptism—200 people were at the waters. Brother Ross baptized 27 persons, and Brother Swanson baptized 13, a total of 40 persons. They returned to the Church building and confirmed them, with the Holy Spirit bearing a wonderful evidence to the ordinance. The following Sunday, our brothers administered Sacrament to those men they had baptized and ordained six of them elders.

On Friday, September 16, our two brothers, along with some Nigerian elder brothers, baptized 744 persons (from 9 am to 1 pm). Many stood and waited nine hours to be baptized. They had been at the stream since 4:00 that morning. The Nigerian elders departed themselves with dignity and excellence in the ordinance of baptism.

The following Sunday, at the Church service in Utu Abak, our brothers ordained six more brother elders and two sister deaconesses. They also confirmed 195 members and served the Lord’s Supper, as well. The next day, at the Otoro Branch, our brothers confirmed approximately 500 members.

On Wednesday, September 21, our two Missionaries baptized more than 500 persons at Ediene where Brother Ebong lives. The next Friday, September 23, they returned to Ediene and confirmed the hundreds they had baptized. To date, they had baptized over 1200 persons and ordained 18 elders.

On Wednesday, September 28, our brothers went to the waters to baptize again. Brother Swanson states:

Today we are going to baptize. Only six elders show up. Another elder and I took one group and start downgrade to the stream where we are going to baptize. The people are very happy. As we go along the path, it becomes too narrow to accommodate the people. They spread

out as they pass by me. As we go down the grade to the stream, I can look ahead and down on the people. They are walking as fast as they can now. There is a quickening spirit as they approach the stream. The tall grass and bushes begin to shake under their feet and then go down as hundreds of bare feet stomp over everything on the way.

There are cripples limping along, but going so fast that they pass me up. Old people are half carried by the human tide, and hurrying on in the strength of the spirit which we can all feel. There are pregnant women, very heavy and ready to be delivered any hour; also big muscular men, dwarfish young people who claim they are 15 years old and demand their baptism, and there are also many shy young women.

One mass of humans, all moving in one motion as one person, one thought, and everything driven by one spirit: the happy spirit of baptism. What an experience to go through! I thought what a wonderful picture it would be with a camera, but dismissed it as quickly as I had it. Nothing but the soul has the capacity to see all there is here. Altogether there were over 500 baptized.

Saturday, October 1, 1960, is Independence Day for Nigeria. Until October 12, there are celebrations and programs in every large village. Natives are dressed in their finest clothes, many carrying white and green flags, the new Nigerian banner. There are parades, dances, and all sorts of ancient demonstrations. Because of this, our two brothers were limited in their spiritual endeavors. Nonetheless, they attended Church services wherever they could, baptizing many people, and ordaining elders, teachers, deacons, and deaconesses. The brothers traveled partly by car, but mostly by motorcycle and bicycles on jungle roads, inhabited by wild beasts of all kinds. Their trust in God was unwavering, for danger lurked everywhere.

Brother Swanson had been recommended to be ordained an evangelist by the Quorum of Seventy in the United States of America. Accordingly, on Sunday, October 16, Brother John Ross washed his feet and ordained him an evangelist. A wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit was felt and enjoyed by all present. Brother Swanson writes, "What an incident to remember! Ordained in Africa!"

The next day, Monday, our brothers traveled to Midim, Manta, and Ikot Oku Mfang to confirm those who had been previously baptized. The confirmations lasted from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM. A total of 415 souls were confirmed. The following Monday, our brothers baptized 700 persons.

While rejoicing in their success, adversity struck again. The two brothers received a notice from the Immigration Office in Lagos, ordering them to leave the Eastern Region and return to Lagos, the Western Region, immediately. The notice stated that their visas gave them permission to work as missionaries only in the Western Region and not in the Eastern Region. However, upon advice to defy this order (by whom, they do not say), they remained in the Eastern Region.

The reason they had been ordered back to Lagos was because A. A. Dick had written to the Immigration Office in Lagos asking to have them detained so that they would not be able to go into the Eastern Region. This was confirmed by V. N. Nnamani, the Immigration Officer in Lagos, on October 25, 1960, when Brother Ross was leaving for home. The officer told him that Dick's letter writing, prior to the brothers leaving for the Eastern Region on June 14, was the cause for the recall order.

By the grace of God, their missionary endeavors had prospered exceedingly. They baptized some leaders and many members of the Nazarene Church after they promised to accept the Faith and Doctrine and the Law and Order of The Church of Jesus Christ.

But once again the demon of adversity raised its ugly head to devour the two missionaries. On October 11, 1960, the brothers received a summons to appear in court at Ekot Ekpene on November 21, 1960. A. A. Dick accused the brothers of misrepresentation. He said they were impostors, being missionaries for the Nazarene Church and not for The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brothers Ross and Swanson informed the parent Church in the U. S. A. concerning all that had taken place and asked that A. A. Dick and all the elders who supported him be separated from the priesthood. This was done at the General Church Conference in October 1960. (*General Church Minutes*, October 1960, p. 1052)

On Friday, October 21, Brother John Ross departed for America, much to the sorrow of Brother Swanson. The happy note was that Brother Alma Nolfi (from Glassport, Pennsylvania) was making preparations to go to Nigeria.

While awaiting the arrival of Brother Alma Nolfi, Brother Swanson continued his missionary endeavors, alone but undaunted, going from station to station, baptizing, and confirming hundreds of people, and ordaining elders, teachers, deacons, and deaconesses whenever the Holy Spirit directed him to do so.

While riding his bike to visit with Brother S. U. Bassey at his compound, Brother Swanson was forced to go by A. A. Dick's home. Of this encounter, he writes, "He was sitting by the road with a dozen of his henchmen. As I went by, a silence fell on all of them. Everyone turned his attention to me. I looked a hole right through A. A. Dick as I rode by. The natural man in me says; 'stop and have it over'; the spiritual man says; 'Keep right on pedaling your bike', so I rode by."

The next day, however, the gloom of encountering Dick was dispelled into happiness as our brother baptized 200 persons in a stream behind the Anang School. These people were the ones whom they had missed at Otoro and Utu Abak. The following day, he went to Etok Uruk Eshiet and baptized 500 persons with the help of some elders who went with him. The next day, at another place, 500 more persons were baptized. The Restored Gospel was spreading like wildfire. Without the help of God, our brother could not perform this great task.

The bush is not only inhabited by wild beasts but also infested with robbers at a place called Midim. Brother Swanson refers to these robbers as the "Midimanton robbers" because they reminded him of the Gadianton robbers recorded in The Book of Mormon.

Brother Swanson spent every spare moment preaching and teaching The Restored Gospel, the Bible, and The Book of Mormon; and the elders were eager to learn. They visited him daily, coming from many miles to be taught. Through it all, God gave him grace and strength to accomplish this work.

(The following portion of this history is taken from the journals of Brothers Swanson and Nolfi.)

On Friday, November 4, Brother Alma Nolfi arrived in Nigeria, much to Brother Swanson's great joy. It was a wonderful reunion, embracing each other, shedding tears of happiness, and prayers of thanksgiving to Almighty God for Brother Nolfi's safe arrival.

Upon reaching their place of abode and cleaning up a bit, Brother Nolfi writes, "We had spaghetti for our first meal together." The next day, he was taken to Ndyia and introduced to all the elders.

Brother Nolfi was put to work (spiritually) immediately. On Sunday, November 6, the two brothers confirmed 250 persons. The next day, they baptized 464 persons at Ikot Ubo and Ikot Ukpong. The brothers were kept busy, day after day, baptizing, confirming, preaching, and teaching. What a marvelous way to spend one's time! Brothers Swanson's and Nolfi's records show them baptizing hundreds of people and spending hours at a time confirming them. Much of their time was also spent anointing people and praying for their healing. The Lord did answer their prayers and healed many.

On Saturday, November 26, 1960, Brother S. U. Bassey handed Brother Swanson 14 letters, which A. A. Dick had mailed to him while he was in America. Brother Bassey relinquished these letters because A. A. Dick had attempted to wrest them from him. Brothers Swanson and Nolfi read them with dismay as they discovered Dick had two wives when he was baptized in 1954. While in America, he wrote to Bassey asking him to cover up the fact that he had two wives. In his letters, he also told some of his supporters to "pad" the reports to the Conference in America so that they would not be discovered taking money for themselves. He used to sign his name "Head Bishop of America" and wrote that he would be the chairman of the General Church Conference in October.

When Brothers Swanson and Nolfi went to Nigeria, they discovered that Dick had acquired four wives. "He kept these wives in different hideouts," Brother Swanson writes. It is no wonder that Dick wanted

these letters at any cost. He could not win his case with such damaging evidence.

Brothers Swanson and Nolfi at one point served Sacrament to about 1,000 people. Shortly thereafter, our brothers initiated the proposition of electing presiding elders over each Branch, which pleased the Nigerian brothers.

On December 28, Brother Swanson had a terrible recurrence of malaria. Immediately, Brother Nolfi took him to the hospital at Anua. He was in serious trouble as the fever attacked him unmercifully. He was bedridden for a few days and began to think of returning home. (*The record up to 1960 stops here.*)

Note: *The history of the church in Nigeria will be continued in the next volume of "The History of The Church of Jesus Christ."*

9

The Leadership
of
The Church
of Jesus Christ

CHAPTER NINE

... [T]he princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. . . Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. . . Matthew 20:26, 28

THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GENERAL CHURCH

President, William H. Cadman, 1922-1963

Personal Data	<i>birth: 12/19/1876; baptism: 12/16/1896; death: 4/15/63</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: July 1902; apostle: July 1904</i>
Leadership	<i>GC Second Counselor: 1915-19; GC First Counselor: 1907-15 and 1919-22; GC President: 1922-63</i>
Mission Work	<i>American Indians: Muncey, Six Nations, Tuscarora, Standing Rock Reservations (Wakpala); Nigeria, West Africa</i>
Publications	<i>author: "The History of The Church of Jesus Christ;" and founder and first editor-in-chief of "The Gospel News," The Church's official monthly publication.</i>

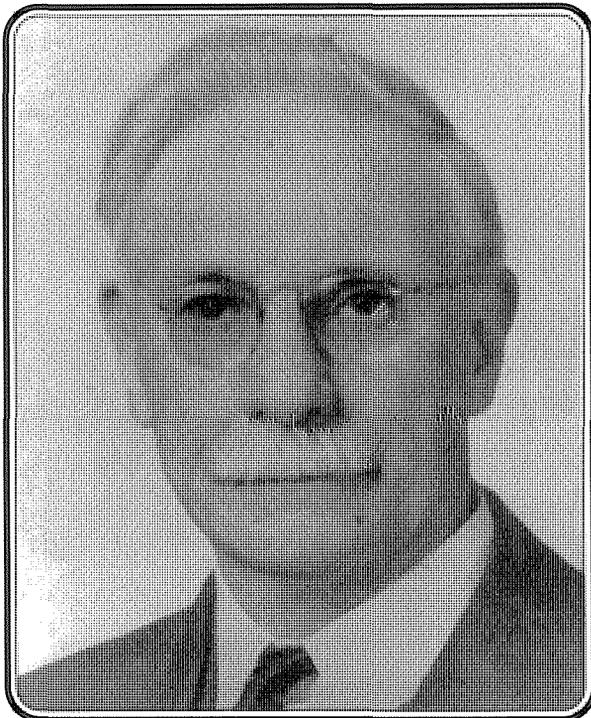
William H. Cadman, the son of the second president of the Church, Brother William Cadman, was born in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania on December 19, 1876. He was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ on December 16, 1896, and was ordained an elder in July, 1902. He was ordained an apostle in July 1904, and three years later elected the first counselor of the General Church. He was married to Sister Sadie Cadman, founder of the Ladies' Uplift Circle, and was the father of four daughters, Sisters Mabel Bickerton, Ruth Mountain, Sara Vancik, and Grace Landrey.

He served as president of The Church of Jesus Christ from July, 1922 until his death on April 15, 1963, over forty years. Brother Cad-

man was a shining light for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and an untiring worker for the Church. An article in the *Monongahela Daily Republican*, reporting on his death, had this to say about him:

Active until illness struck a few months ago, he was instrumental in publishing the church newspaper as its editor, and in preaching in various parts of the United States. He wrote the history of the church in 1945 and had an active part in the publication of the church hymnal.

President Cadman had a deep concern for the depressed people of the world. He tried his best to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ among those he could reach through the missionary field. He also carried the Gospel to the North American Indians, preaching at Tuscarora, Muncey, San Carlos, Grand River (Six Nations), Cherokee, Wakpala (Cheyenne-Sioux) and Mexican Indian Reservations. [He] . . . personally helped in baptizing more than 2,000 natives in the jungles of West Africa in 1954.



William H. Cadman

His plans to carry the missionary work to other parts of Africa, Italy, Mexico, and Canada this year and to organize the church of his faith in those areas had to be postponed because failing health precluded the trips.

Mr. Cadman was beloved by all, especially the American Indians. Members of the Indian Council with headquarters in the nation's capital have visited numerous times at his home on Finley Street, Monongahela, to consult on various problems confronting their peoples. During the dedication of the Peace Bridge between Canada and Buffalo, N. Y., Mr. Cadman was the only white man the Indians of the Six Nation Reservation asked to take part in the program with them. He later addressed the council of the Six Nation Reservation.

Through his efforts, people from various parts of the world have learned of his church. Inquiries recently have been received from India.

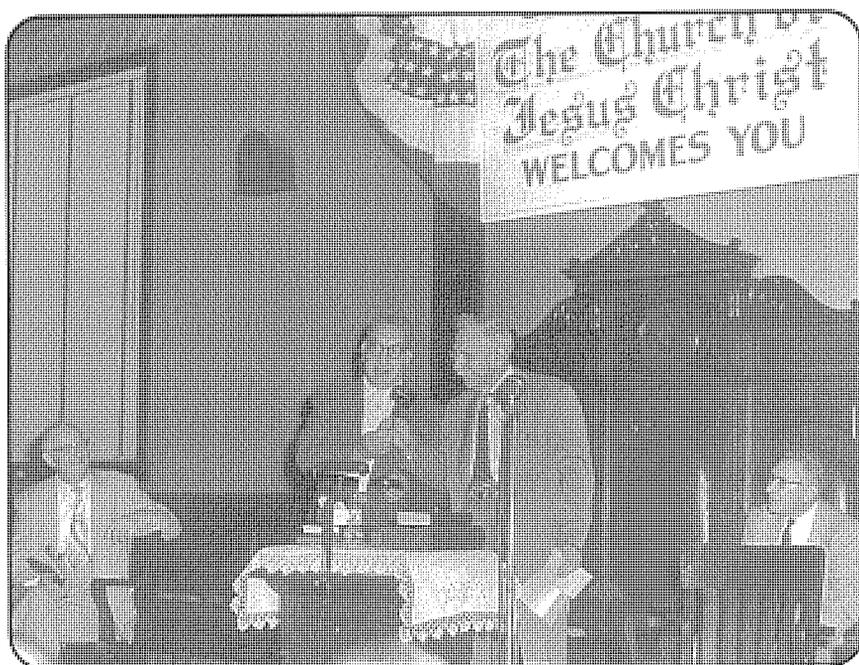
At the church's general conference held in Monongahela, leaders from all branches of the church were addressed by President Cadman after he had been carried to the rostrum. Members stated his sermon was more inspiring than any he had preached in his long religious career. It was the last time he spoke to his followers. Felled by a stroke, he was taken to the hospital only two days after his inspiring words. He died one week later.

The host of friends made in the Monongahela community, where he resided most of his life, came to know him as an example of Christian living.

“There Is a Better Day Coming”

At his funeral service on April 20, 1963, Brother Thurman S. Furnier reminded the congregation of Brother Cadman's last message delivered to the elders assembled at the April Conference. It was in this stirring plea that “Brother Will,” as he was so affectionately known to many, asked every elder to continue to strive for unity. Quoting from the hymn, “O God Give Strength,” Brother Cadman reminded the General Priesthood that God had promised His aid when all were united. He exhorted the elders, therefore, to strive for unity of the Faith in the working for the Gospel. His last reassuring words were: “I feel that there is a better day coming for The Church of Jesus Christ.”

Many expressions of gratitude were offered as they described the charitable deeds that had filled the life of Brother Cadman. His sincere con-



William H. Cadman was presented a gavel at the Bronx Branch

cern for others, his constant desire to help the downtrodden, and his unyielding determination to fulfill the Will of God motivated his entire life. His willingness to travel anywhere in the world to spread the Gospel made him an outstanding example of a good worker to every member of the priesthood.

Travels to Africa at 77

Brother Joseph Bittinger recalled the many missionary trips he took with Brother Cadman, especially the trip to Africa when Brother Cadman was 77 years old. Although facing a different climate and other physical hazards that would have been difficult for most men many years younger, Brother Will was nevertheless determined to travel there to start a work, which has since taken hold and prospered. On this trip Brother Cadman confided that, even if it were God's Will that he die in Africa, he would have no regrets because he wanted to "die in the service of the Lord." Brother Bittinger continued:

The life, which has been lived by our president, was an example to everyone. He had courage to stand up for what was right. We have been fortunate to have had his leadership and counsel these many years. We may say of him, in the words of Paul, he has fought a good fight and has kept the faith. Surely, he must be classified with the saints.

His Leadership Has Borne Much Fruit

As was briefly pointed out in Chapter One, the Church flourished in every way under the capable leadership of Brother Will. It grew from a small regionally confined church in the hills of Western Pennsylvania and a small county in Kansas, to extend from the Atlantic Coast in the east to California in the west, from Michigan in the north to Florida in the south. He was directly involved in the establishment of three important missions on the following American Indian Reservations: Muncey and Six Nations in Canada, and Cheyenne River in South Dakota; as well as the mission in Nigeria, Africa. In addition, it was during his term of office that the tremendous influx of Italian-Americans into the Church occurred, with many taking positions of leadership in the ministry.

In summation, Brother Bittinger expressed the feelings of everyone associated with Brother Cadman by saying, "Let us praise God for Brother Cadman's testimony. He has run the race with patience and diligence. He worked for the Gospel so long as God gave him life."

President, Thurman Furnier, 1963-1965

Personal Data	<i>birth: 4/21/1888; baptism: 4/23/1914</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 1/1915, evangelist: 1/1916; apostle: 10/7/17</i>
Leadership	<i>GC Executive Secretary: 1917, GC Second Counselor: 1950-56; GC First Counselor: 1956-63, 1965-71; GC President: 1963-65</i>
Mission Work	<i>American Indians: Muncey, Six Nations (Ontario, Canada), and Standing Rock Indian Reservation (Wakpala, South Dakota)</i>

Thurman S. Furnier was born in Allenport, Pennsylvania on April 21, 1888. He was raised by Christian parents and attended Sunday School at the Methodist Church as a boy although he did not join this or any other church. He married Birdie Riggen in 1907. Brother and Sister

Furnier were both baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ on April 23, 1914, at Smock, Pennsylvania. They had three sons, Lonson, Vincent, and Ether.

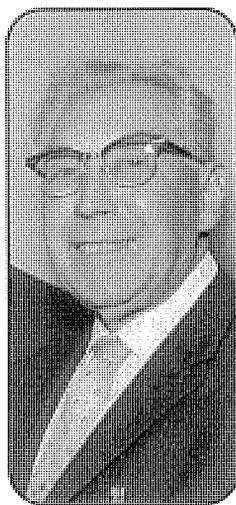
“I Have Got It, I Have Got It!”

In Brother Furnier’s writings, he recalled an experience he received shortly after his baptism:

Shortly after I obeyed the Gospel, a number of brothers and sisters from other branches attended Sunday services at Smock, Pennsylvania. Brother Nephi Federer preached a wonderful sermon in the morning. Our hearts were prepared for the afternoon testimony service.

I retired to a woods nearby, in fasting and prayer. I sincerely asked God to baptize me with “fire and the Holy Ghost.” I returned to the place of meeting. During the course of the meeting, Sister Drucilla Gollick arose and spoke in the gift of tongues. The Spirit of God rested upon me, and I arose to bear my testimony. I remember well I was expressing my thankfulness to God for calling me (the only one of my father’s family) into the Gospel, when suddenly

the Power of God rested upon me and with uplifted hands, I cried out in a loud voice, “I have got it, I have got it!” It was the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. The Power of God was resting on me so greatly I felt as though I could have lifted brick houses with my right and left hands. The room was crowded, but the Spirit carried me to my brother-in-law, Richard Lowther. I took him by the hand and invited him to obey the Gospel. After embracing others, the power of God left me and my normal strength returned. What a contrast between the power of God and the strength of man! This can only be understood by those who have had the experience.



Thurman S. Furnier

The Book of Mormon Challenged

Brother Furnier became a serious student of the Bible very early in his walk with the Lord. His inquiring mind led him to search the Word

of God for the answers to all his questions on faith and doctrine. It was only a matter of time before this led him into a direct challenge of the Church's acceptance of The Book of Mormon as scripture. In his own words:

Shortly after obeying the Gospel, The Book of Mormon was presented to me. I did not know what it was, but supposed it to be a Bible story or something of the kind. I was then reading the New Testament, which I was very much interested in, and made reply to my wife (for The Book of Mormon was left with her, and it was she who presented it to me) that I had no time for other books at the present. I read the New Testament through twice to satisfy myself of the things I was hearing preached from time to time by our elders. After finishing reading the New Testament the second time, I inquired of my wife, "Where is that book that the Church has and believes in?" Upon receiving it and finding that it was supposed to have been given to a man (Joseph Smith, Jr.) by an angel of the Lord, I became very sincere, because I was afraid of being led away by false spirits. I went to a hill [nearby] and kneeled down and petitioned the Lord to direct me. I knew that I had done God's Will thus far, but I was afraid to trust in the arm of flesh. The testimony of some of my brothers or sisters that an angel gave this book to Joseph Smith did not satisfy me.

I made it plain in my prayer to God that I was afraid of being led away by false spirits and also asked Him to manifest Himself to me, relative to the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon. Upon reading more of the book, I was caused to have so much joy that the power of God came down on me from time to time, and I would tell others what wonderful truths I had found. I guess they thought me crazy or mad.

Upon further investigation, I read that God would manifest the truth of these things written in The Book of Mormon by the gift of the Holy Ghost, if asked of the truthfulness of them in the name of Jesus Christ. This satisfied me. I can testify that God by His Holy Spirit has shown me that The Book of Mormon is the work of God and worthy of any person's investigation.

"Follow Me"

When Jesus called his disciples in Galilee, He said to them, "follow me," and straightway they left their nets behind and followed Him. This level of dedication and commitment is reflected in the life of Brother

Furnier, even as a very young man—within just three and one-half years of his baptism, he had been ordained to every male office in the Church: deacon, teacher, elder, evangelist, and apostle. The ordinations to the latter three offices were on January 3, 1915, January 3, 1916, and October 7, 1917, respectively.

In addition, he also served in the following elected offices in the General Church: secretary in October 1917; second counselor in April 1950; first counselor in April 1956; president in April 1963; and first counselor for the second time in April 1965.

Brother Furnier presided over several branches and missions of the Church including Martin, Lucyville, and Dunlevy, Pennsylvania; and Detroit, Michigan. He also took an active part in preaching the Gospel among the American Indians in Muncey and Six Nations, Ontario, Canada, and Wakpala, South Dakota.

Blessed with the Gifts of the Spirit

God blessed Brother Furnier with many spiritual gifts. He sang in the Spirit, prophesied by the gift of the Holy Spirit, cast out devils in the name of Jesus Christ, and was given power to heal. He was noted for diligence in the study of the scriptures, resulting in a deep understanding and knowledge of the Bible and The Book of Mormon. God blessed him with a retentive mind and eloquence in preaching when under the inspiration of the Spirit. He was one of the most knowledgeable men in the Church with respect to the Apostasy and the Restoration and tutored many young elders over the years.

In April 1972, Brother Furnier asked the Quorum of Twelve to relieve him of the responsibility of taking an active part in their business because of failing health. The Quorum unanimously passed a resolution making him an honorary apostle with all the privileges attending the office. He was called home to be with the Lord later that same year.

President, Gorie Ciaravino, 1965-1974

Personal Data	<i>birth: 8/5/11; baptism: 1/17/32</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 1/12/36; evangelist: 7/14/40; apostle: 4/15/56</i>
Leadership	<i>GMBA President: 1943-1948; GC Executive Secretary: 1946-60; Michigan-Ontario District President: 1959-1964; GC First Counselor: 1963-65, 1974-79; GC President: 1965-74</i>
Mission Work	<i>Nigeria, Africa; Italy</i>

Gorie Ciaravino was born in Detroit, Michigan on August 5, 1911. His parents were Anthony and Rose Ciaravino, who, at the time, were atheists. He had two sisters, Julie and Jesta. Young Gorie was not afforded any religious training during his childhood. Rather, his early experiences reflected the wilder side of life. His daring was displayed when, at the age of 11, he drove his equally young cousins, his foot barely reaching the clutch, across the State of Michigan from Benton Harbor to Detroit, where he was eventually pulled over by a policeman and brought in to the station. Fortunately for him, another policeman who knew his father let him off easy. He was told to come back when he was 14 to legally obtain a license to drive. This he did when he lied about his age at 13. During prohibition, he narrowly escaped arrest delivering a shipment of illegal alcoholic beverages when the drop-off point was raided five minutes after he left.



Gorie Ciaravino

By the time he was 17, however, his home life had changed. His family had moved to Brooklyn, New York, and his father began to give serious consideration to the existence of God. While the Ciaravinos were on a return visit to see relatives in Detroit, young Gorie set off to hitchhike from Detroit to Chicago, hoping to stay with a friend and secure work. Since it was rather late in the day, a truck driver took him only as far as a friend's house where Gorie planned to retire for the night. Little did he know that his trip would end there. His friend, Dominic Benenati, who had been baptized, introduced him to the Church.

When the Ciaravinos returned home to Brooklyn, they began attending services at the Brooklyn Mission, and in July 1931 his parents were baptized.

Born Again

Six months later, while on a trip to Connecticut, Gorie received his calling from the Lord. Seemingly out of nowhere, he felt the Spirit of God question him, “What will become of your soul should your life end during this journey?” Although this question pierced his heart, he excused his lack of commitment to his youth. Nevertheless, he prayed that the Lord would grant him an opportunity one day to serve Him. As soon as he returned home, in January of 1932, Brother Joseph DiFede baptized him.

Catapulted 15 Feet into the Air

Not long after he was baptized, Brother Gorie traveled on his motorcycle to the General Church Conference in Youngstown, Ohio. He stopped at Sister Ann Damore’s home, and, after a short visit, continued on to conference. While going down a hill, his front wheel hit a curb. The impact catapulted him up 15 feet into the air over the utility wires, and carried him 45 feet away. His external and internal injuries were so extensive that the attending physician gave him, at most, five hours to live, and made no attempt to save his life. When news of the accident reached conference, Brother John Penn led the congregation in prayer on his behalf. Shortly afterwards, Brother Joseph Corrado went to the hospital to anoint him. Brother Gorie testifies:

After I received the miracle of healing, the doctor inquired of the nurse in charge, “What time did the young man die last night?” The nurse replied that I was still alive, and the doctor was so amazed that he started to give orders to the staff to take care of me. During my six-week stay at the hospital, Brother Anthony Corrado ministered to me

constantly, and the saints of that locality rose to the occasion and rallied around me and my family.

After six months in a body cast, he miraculously recovered by the healing power of God, to the amazement of his doctors.

Early in 1934, the Ciaravinos moved back to Detroit, becoming members of the newly established North Side Mission, which eventually became Branch #4. Brother Gorie was ordained into the priesthood on January 12, 1936.

In March of 1938, he married Sister Antoinette Acquilino from Lorain, Ohio. His wife was a wonderful support and strength for him through the years. They had two children, Carol and Gordon.

In July 1940, he was ordained an evangelist. He served as GMBA President from 1942 to 1948. On April 15, 1956, he was ordained into the Quorum of Twelve by Brother Joseph Loyalvo. During the ordination, the Word of the Lord was given, "This is the same Church that I have accepted in the days of Alma and the Church of Philadelphia." He served as executive secretary of the General Church from 1946 to 1960. When the Church was formed into districts in 1959, he was elected as the first president of the Michigan-Ontario District and served until 1964. He was elected first counselor of the General Church in 1964 and president in April 1965, serving in that capacity until 1974. Then he again served as first counselor from 1974 to 1979. He went on missionary trips to Nigeria, Africa in 1972 and 1974, and to Italy in 1977.

Brother Gorie was called home on April 7, 1995. His many years of service were a great blessing to the Church, and he will be remembered for his dedication, hard work, warmth, and faithfulness. He was interested in getting to know everyone he met personally and transmitted a genuine concern for them.

President, Dominic R. Thomas, 1974-Present

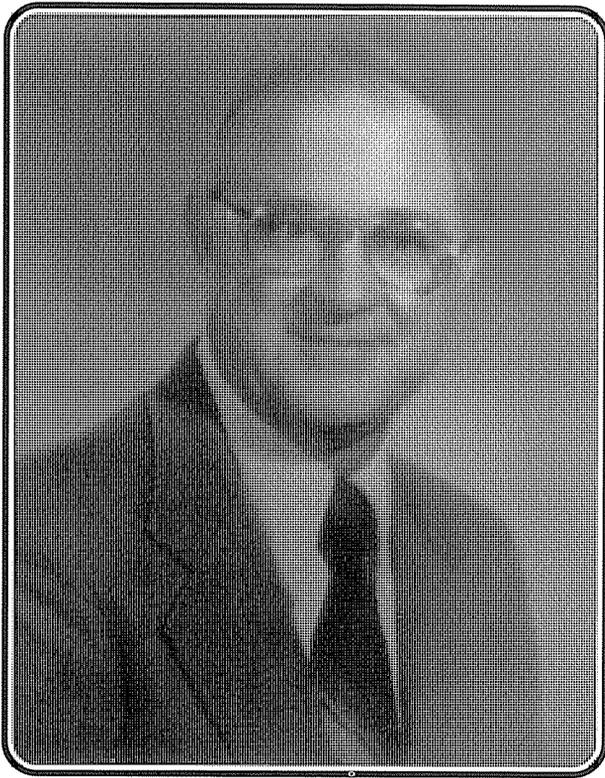
Personal Data	<i>birth: 9/11/24; baptism: 2/28/43</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 1950; evangelist: 1957; apostle: 1964</i>
Leadership	<i>GMBA President 1948-1966; GC Quorum of Seventy President: 1962-63; Michigan/Ontario District President: 1963; Chairman Special Affairs Committee; GC First Counselor: 1971-74; GC President: 1974-present</i>
Mission Work	<i>Muncey Indian Tribe, Canada; Nigeria, West Africa</i>

Dominic Thomas was born in New Castle, Pennsylvania on September 11, 1924. His mother died in 1925 and his cousin, who lived in Pitcarin, Pennsylvania, raised him until his father remarried in 1929. The family moved to Lorain, Ohio, and shortly thereafter his parents met the Church. They were baptized in 1931.

Young Dominic began attending services in Lorain and was active in the Sunday School and MBA. It wasn't long before the love and generosity of the saints became evident. When his father lost his home during the depression, Brother Jim Acquilino offered him his. His entire family lived with the Acquilinos for approximately two years until his father was back to work again. On another occasion when his mother was very ill, he can recall how the sisters in Lorain came to their home daily and helped nurse her back to health again. It was during those early years in the Church that he developed a desire to become a member, as he was personally touched by the examples of love and caring demonstrated by the brothers and sisters of the Lorain Branch.

He graduated from high school in 1942, and then moved to Detroit, Michigan where he found work at the Ford Motor Company as a metallurgical apprentice. It was during this time that he began to pray that he would receive a penitent spirit, and on February 28, 1943 the Lord called him into the Church.

Shortly after his baptism, he went into the military service. While serving in the military, Brother Dominic attended the University of Arizona in 1944 and 1945. The Lord was his company and strength and provided him with many wonderful experiences to sustain him in his faith. On one occasion, he prayed as a young person that God would



Dominic R. Thomas

assist and encourage him in his service to Him. His father, who had passed away in 1945, appeared to him in a dream. Brother Dominic asked him whether, in retrospect, it was worth serving God, and he nodded his head most vigorously in a very encouraging way and expressed to him how happy he was in the Paradise of God.

Preparation for Leadership

When he returned to Detroit after completing his military service in 1946, he married Sister Dolores Romano. They were blessed with three children, Jared, Jeffrey, and Rebecca. He enrolled at Wayne State University in Detroit where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in 1950 and became a classroom teacher for the Detroit Public Schools. He continued his education at Wayne State University and received a Master's Degree in Edu-

cation in 1952 and a Doctorate in Educational Administration in 1961. His career in education included some of the following responsibilities: school administration, director of testing and reading programs, curriculum consulting, and administration of a citywide language education program.

“My Jesus I Love Thee, I Know Thou Art Mine”

One experience Brother Dominic would often refer to later was a short dream he had in which he saw the Lord being crucified. As the nails were being driven through the Lord’s hands, he awakened in tears singing that wonderful hymn, “My Jesus I Love Thee, I Know Thou Art Mine.”

In 1948 he was elected to the office of GMBA President and served in that capacity until 1966. It was during Brother Dominic’s administration that the Church experienced a significant revival amongst the young people of the Church. A change in the GMBA bylaws opened the way for young people to have a more active part in the Church. At the same time, greater efforts were also being made to reach out to the rising generation, which brought forth much fruit during his tenure. During this same time, the GMBA became involved with a fund-raising project to purchase land for the construction of the General Church Auditorium. This project was successful and eventually led to the purchase of the land upon which the World Conference Center now sits.

The Anointing of God

In the fall of 1950 he was ordained an elder and served along with Brother Joseph Milantoni at Muncey, Ontario, Canada in 1951 and 1952. Following that, he served as Presiding Elder at Branch 2. He was ordained an evangelist in 1957 and an apostle in 1964.

The night before his ordination, he prayed until dawn and just as he was about to end his prayers, he heard a choir singing the hymn, “Jesus Lover of My Soul.” The words of that hymn answered the yearning of his heart for God’s help as he entered the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

The day of ordination brought additional encouragement, including the following experiences that were recorded during the meeting:

A basin and towel were then brought forth for the washing of Brother Thomas' feet. As our brothers sat on the rostrum awaiting this sacred ordinance, Brother Anthony Corrado, filled with the Spirit of God, took the towel and began to pray with a voice that could be heard by all present. While Brother Thomas' feet were being washed, his countenance was changed unto the likeness of an angel. Brother Corrado then spoke in the gift of tongues and Brother Mark Randy gave the interpretation, "This is My Will." Brother Biscotti then laid hands on Brother Thomas and anointed him with oil. While offering a fervent prayer he spoke in tongues, which were interpreted thus: "In the Name of our God, we do this." Having been anointed an apostle, he arose filled with the Spirit of God, approached the ministry, and began to kiss and embrace each elder brother as he went along, including the elders who were seated in the congregation.

Sister Ruth Braendel from Detroit, Branch #1 had a vision in which she saw Brother Dominic's feet just above the ankles, covered with brass, standing on solid rock. Sister Clara Gentile from Detroit, Branch #2 saw two hands present him a bouquet of beautiful white flowers with roots ready to be planted.

In 1971, Brother Dominic was elected first counselor of the General Church and in 1974, Brother Dominic was elected President of the General Church and is currently still serving in that capacity. More will be written in the next volume about the significant progress the Church has made during his tenure in office. For now, however, it should at least be noted that the Church has experienced unprecedented growth in the past 25 years, with respect to worldwide evangelism. The Church of Jesus Christ, as of this writing, has established missions in over 20 different nations in both hemispheres, in addition to five different American Indian Tribes. The number of Church members in foreign countries has been growing rapidly and has far exceeded the rolls in the United States.

Shortly after the World Missionary Conference in 1983, several General Church missionaries passed away which raised much concern in Brother Dominic's mind over the work at home and abroad. The night

after Brother Frank Morle's funeral, Brother Dominic had a short dream in which he found himself at a church gathering. In one corner of the meeting-place, a sister sat weeping. Brother Thomas went to her side and tried to console her, but she refused to be comforted; and, looking at him through her tears, she said in a loud voice, "The Great Work of the Lord." After the fourth effort, he awoke. It left him with the conviction that we, as a people, need to press on with the work of the Lord in spite of any and all setbacks that come to the Church.

When his wife, Sister Dolores, was stricken with cancer in 1974, they were strengthened by the prayers of the saints and God's grace throughout her illness and recovery. The contributions Brother Dominic has made to the Church over the years have been considerable, and, after all these years, he is continuing to bear fruit and provide leadership to the Church.

MEMBERS OF THE QUORUM OF TWELVE APOSTLES

Alma Cadman, 1908-1972

Personal Data *birth: 11/27/1878; baptism: 1895; death: 1972*
 Ordinations *elder: 1900; apostle: July 1908; re-ordained an apostle: 1925*
 Leadership *Overseer of the General Church Colony in Kansas: 1910; Quorum of
 Twelve Apostles President: 1927-1971*

Alma Cadman served the Church as an apostle for 64 years. The following words are excerpted from a tribute written by the Quorum of Twelve for The Gospel News in his honor after his death in 1972:

Brother Alma Bickerton Cadman was born November 27, 1878. His parents were the late William and Elizabeth Worrall Cadman of West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. Brother Alma is the youngest of twelve children.

In 1899, he married LaVina Secrest and subsequently the Lord blessed this union with nine children, four sons, and five daughters. His posterity, to date, includes 26 grandchildren, 86 great grand-children, and 13

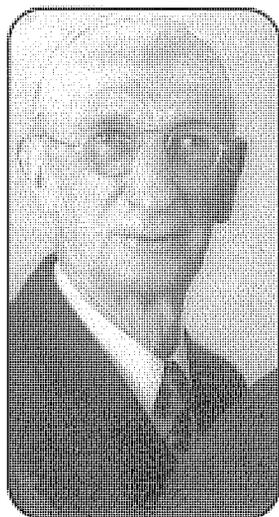
great, great grandchildren. His wife, LaVina, passed away in January of 1959. Her death was the first in this large family.

As a child, Brother Alma attended the Church regularly with his parents, and he has often mentioned that he was in the Church “all of his life.” In 1895 he was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ by his father and continued to attend the meetings. He delighted to listen and learn from his older brothers of the ways of God. In 1900 he was ordained an elder, and in 1908 he was ordained an apostle. He was elected President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1927 and held this office until 1971. At the April Conference of 1971, the Quorum elected him as Honorary President for life. The apostles did this, primarily, for his great service

to The Church and, secondarily, because of his failing health, which prevented him from attending Conferences and curtailed his activities as President of the Quorum.

Brother Alma loved to travel, and one of his first trips, along with two other young men, was from Pennsylvania to Kansas in 1902, on bicycles, where he met Brother William Bickerton. In later years, he also made several trips to California.

In 1906, he moved his family to St. John, Kansas. He became employed at Tudor’s Store as a clerk. The store is still in existence. In 1910, he was placed in charge of the Church “Colony,” consisting of a 1,920-acre ranch, which the Church had purchased with the hope of it becoming a place of “gathering” for the people of God. Many families lived and labored on this ranch for several years.



Alma Cadman

The Seventh Day of Rest

The pamphlet, *The Seventh Day of Rest*, describing the Kingdom of Christ, which shall be established on earth prior to the Millennium (or thousand-year reign with Christ), and which is referred to by The Church as the “Peaceful Reign,” was written by Brother Alma.

The Lord had extended the life of our beloved Brother Alma to the ripe age of ninety-three years, and it had been a full, rich and rewarding one. The Church has been truly blessed to have had a brother of this caliber as one of her leaders; a man gifted in understanding prophecy

and in the ability to transmit that understanding to others. His knowledge of the Scriptures, great in its scope, was a product of much prayer and fasting, study and research, and above everything else, living a life of righteousness and dedication to the service of Almighty God.

We, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, feel highly honored to have been co-workers of Brother Alma Cadman. Many of us have spent quite a few years together with him and, as a result, have been enriched immensely by his wisdom and understanding.

Brother Alma has gone to stand before the presence of Almighty God, to receive his reward of eternal life. However, now that he is called home, we mourn deeply, knowing that with his departure, there will also be passing away an honorable and dedicated man, who represented an era of a Restored Gospel spirit, and a deep prophetic vision.

Charles Ashton, 1908-1955

Personal Data	<i>birth: 5/18/1882; baptism: 1898; death: 1955</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 1903; apostle: July 1908</i>
Leadership	<i>GC Second Counselor: 1919-22; GC First Counselor: 1922-56</i>
Publications	<i>composer: "The Church Which Jesus Christ Set Up" and "My God Thou Seest Me" in the Saints Hymnal</i>

Brother Charles Ashton was born in Coal Valley, Pennsylvania on May 18, 1882. He served as First Counselor to President W. H. Cadman from 1922 until his death and was recognized as one of our best speakers. Excerpts of his testimony, recorded in *A History of the Church of Jesus Christ*, authored by William H. Cadman, pages 356-359, follow:

Path to Salvation

I obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ in my youth, having been taught the principles of salvation by my grandparents, John and Lydia Ashton. At the early age of seven I began reading the Bible and The Book of Mormon, and the more I read the more interested I became. My mind was occupied continually with these sacred writings, and I would often resort to the woods to meditate upon the Word of God and the Plan of Salvation. I was told that The Book of Mormon would dispel the

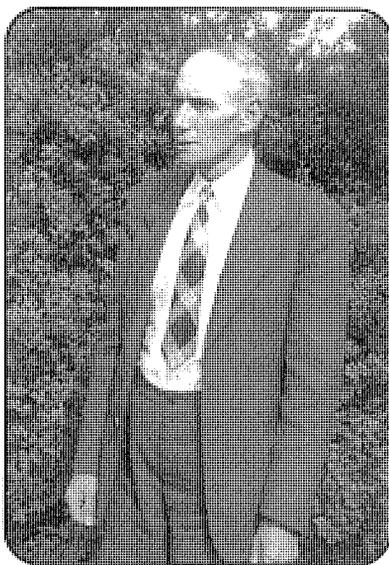
mystery of how the forefathers of the American Indians came to this land. I was greatly impressed and delighted as I read an account of their travels and the dealings of the Lord with them. . . . When I was sixteen years old, my long-cherished hopes were realized: I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church, receiving a divine joy in my soul, which cannot be explained by mortal tongue. I was visited with a number of Heavenly dreams for my encouragement and guidance.

Beginnings of a Fruitful Ministry

Shortly after my 21st birthday, I was ordained an elder; and the Lord began to inspire my mind upon many beautiful subjects—utterance being given me to declare them to all who would hear. The blessing of God was with me in my ministerial work, and His Spirit bore witness to my soul that I was engaged authentically in the cause of righteousness. I can testify that the coming forth of the Angel to Joseph Smith in 1820 marked the beginning of the work of the Latter Days. Apart from my grandparents, there were none of my near relatives in the Church until 1905, when my mother obeyed the Gospel; then followed two of my sisters.

In 1907, I married Mary Belle Wells, daughter of Brother and Sister William H. Wells. Brother Wells was an elder in the Church located in Roscoe, Pennsylvania. My wife had obeyed the Gospel one year preceding our marriage.

After I was ordained an elder, I became active in teaching the Gospel in the vicinity of my home. Assisted by two young brothers, we met at the home of Brother and Sister James Gilbert who had recently moved to this place. There were a few baptized, and we were recognized as the



Charles Ashton

Coal Valley Mission under the jurisdiction of the McKeesport Branch. The major work of the Italian people coming into the Church had its beginning here. An experience was given where a river was seen flowing from this place and branching out over a vast expanse of territory. It is highly gratifying to see this under fulfillment.

At the death of my sister, Bertha, my wife and I took her baby son, Joseph, into our home to raise. He obeyed the Gospel at the age of twenty. In 1935 my wife passed away. In the autumn of 1936, I married Minnie McKean. She had obeyed the Gospel a few months preceding our marriage.

In 1910, primarily through the efforts of Brothers Ashton and Cherry, the work in Mount Pleasant was reactivated, with several baptisms resulting. Brother Ashton continues:

During the past twenty years of my life I have spent considerable time among the Italian Brothers and Sisters of the Church. On one of my trips to New Jersey, the Lord revealed in a dream that my work was to assist the Church to carry its burden, and by doing so, I would please the Lord. In an experience I was shown that this Church stood separate from the whole world and eventually it would be attacked by enemies of the truth.

In conclusion, I can say the blessing of God has attended me throughout the years of my life. Although I have encountered many difficulties and my pathway has been obstructed by the enemy of righteousness, the strong arm of God came to my rescue in every time of need; and a living testimony has sustained me. The Spirit of the Lord has borne witness to my soul concerning the restoration of Israel on this land and the construction of a Glorious Kingdom, which will eclipse all others that have been before it. I recommend the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only sure "safety zone" in which the human race may find refuge.

Vernon Chester, 1911-1950

Personal Data *birth: April 1883; death: 1950*

Ordinations *elder: July 1908; evangelist: July 1909; apostle: July 1911*

Brother John Penn, 1910-1955

Personal Data *birth: January 1867; baptism: July 1908; death: July 1955*

Ordinations *elder: April 1909; evangelist: January 1910; apostle: July 1910*

Brother Penn was born in Stewart, Virginia in January 1867 and died in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 8, 1955 at the age of 88. He spent most of his life in Dunlevy, Pennsylvania and was well respected in that community. As a long-standing member of the Roscoe Branch, he contributed much over the years to that congregation. Brother Penn, in his own words, gives us a small glimpse of his conversion and his ministry:

“I Will Obey This Gospel in Due Time”

In June 1907, while living in Roscoe, Pennsylvania, I met a young man, John Abbott, who first introduced me to the Church by telling me about a baptism which would take place the following Sunday. I went to see the baptism but was late and, when I reached the river, it was over and all had left. While returning to my home, I met Brother Alexander Cherry, who, upon learning that I had been at the river, invited me into the afternoon service that was just starting. During the meeting the persons who had been baptized were confirmed. I later knew them as Brother and Sister George Crombich of Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania. I knew a few of the people of the Church, but from that time on I visited the meetings, finally becoming a member of the MBA. Thus, I met with the Church at least once a week, and sometimes oftener. This continued for about a year, when one Sunday, in a fellowship meeting, I arose and said, “Brothers and sisters, I will obey this Gospel in due time.” On the first Sunday in July 1908, I went to the waters of baptism, sealing my covenant with Christ for time and eternity. Brother Cherry officiated in both the baptism and confirmation.

God Speaks to a Humble Coal Miner

I had an experience on October 27, 1908, which I was asked to write: Having come home from work in the coal mine, I had just washed and sat down to rest, when to my surprise, I heard a mild voice speaking to me saying, “You are the people of the Lord, the chosen

people of God." I arose quickly to see who was speaking, but I then realized that the Lord had caused me to know that I had become one of His chosen people.

During the following January, I had another experience. One night, I had been sitting at the table reading when these words were spoken to me, "You are accepted before Christ. Go before Him and set an example." I cannot find words to convey the greatness of the power of those words. I fell down off the chair to my hands and knees and my prayer was "Oh Lord, teach me Thy Will and what Thou wouldst have me to do."

... as time went on, I was called into the priesthood, being ordained an elder on April 1, 1909 and an evangelist January 1, 1910, with Brother Alexander Cherry officiating at both ordinations. I was ordained an apostle by Brother Nephi Federer on July 1, 1910.

A Bridge Across Ethnic Lines

Then the Lord began to let me know His purpose in causing me to move down the river [from Roscoe to Dunlevy]. Brother Mike Falsetta (at that time a perfect stranger to me) was taken sick and seven doctors had given him up to die. When I heard of his sickness, it was thought that death was upon him. I called to see him and, when I told him of the Church, he believed. I remember well how he said, "Mr. Penn, if you can do anything for me, do it." I administered to him, and he was healed; not only healed, but as a result both he and his wife obeyed the Gospel. He had been a man who did not believe there was a God, but oh, how good and how pleasant it is to be obedient to my Lord and God!

Soon after this, I was called to Monessen to see a sick woman, a stranger at the time, who later became Sister Nolfi. This resulted in the great work among the Italian people. At the time, Joe Corrado (later our brother) was staying in the Nolfi home. The doctor had told him to be sure all her affairs were in order, as he could do nothing for the sick woman and death was expected any minute. I anointed her and she was healed. This made a great impression on Mr. Corrado, who at the time was an atheist and did not believe in God. Being convinced of the power of the Gospel, he asked me to go with him to Glassport to talk to friends there. This was the beginning of the great influx of the Italian people into the Church.

Brother Penn, an African American, had an effective ministry to people of various ethnic backgrounds. It was sometimes said among the saints that Brother Penn was the Italian man's doctor. He felt a calling to pray for the sick and was often blessed with the gift of healing. It has also been said that he preached the Gospel with power. There was also an experience often spoken of by the saints of a fire in his neighborhood. The house next door caught fire and burned completely. The fire leaped over Brother Penn's house and continued to burn. Both neighbors' homes were burned, while the fire never touched Brother Penn's house.

One of the saints from the Roscoe Branch remembered him fondly after his passing:

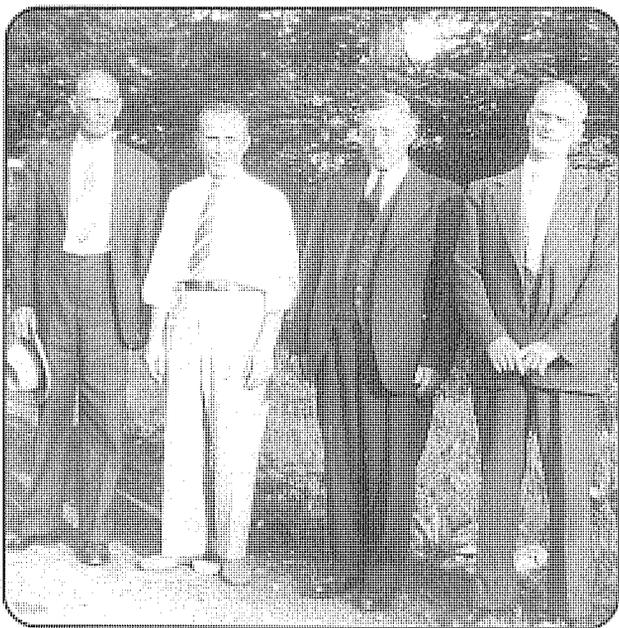
[He] was highly esteemed among the brothers and sisters of Roscoe. I remember well his testimony and when I was a child, his voice, when he preached, shook the house. . . . Many of the brothers and sisters here in Roscoe have memories of calling him to anoint their sick at all hours of the night and they were healed. Yes, he anointed us, prayed for us, blessed our children, and established us in sound principles of Jesus Christ. We pray that God would send us someone with a double portion of the Gift of God that he had. . . . No one could number the sick he anointed, the children he blessed, the baptisms he performed over the period of his years in the Church. All to the honor and glory of God. (*The Gospel News*, September 1955)

Brother Isaac Smith, 1914-1954

Personal Data *birth: 3/6/1884; death: August 1954*

Ordinations *elder: 1911; apostle: 7/4/14*

Isaac Smith was born on March 6, 1884 in Darton, Yorkshire, England and immigrated to the United States in the early twentieth century. He married Bessie Tucker in 1905 and they had a daughter, Lillian. Bessie died in an accident in 1907. It wasn't long before the Lord provided someone to help him care for his young daughter, as young Isaac married Bertha Ashton in 1910. Together they had four children: George, Charles, Mary, and Joseph.



Charles Ashton, Rocco Biscotti, Joseph Dulisse and Isaac Smith

His wife Bertha died in 1918 when their son Joseph was only six weeks old. Once again the Lord provided for Brother Isaac and his children as he married Lena Nicholson in 1920. She already had four children when they married: Marie, Anna, Harry and William, and together they had one daughter, Ruth. They were only married for four years as Lena died in 1924. In 1932, he married Gertrude Akerman, who already had six children of her own: Helen, Ruth, Dorothy, Grace, Arnold and Howard. Together they had one son, Isaac.

Brother Isaac was ordained an elder in 1911 and an apostle on July 4, 1914. He resided in many cities throughout the Monongahela Valley of Pennsylvania and presided over various branches and missions of the Church. Some of his travels took him to the Church Colony in Kansas. In his home branch of Glassport (known earlier as Rock Run), he provided leadership in the planting and development of many new missions over the years, some of which were as far away as Ohio. Many of the missions of the church during that era were established through that branch,

not just in Pennsylvania, but also in Ohio, Michigan and New Jersey. He proved to be a dedicated servant of the Lord.

Herman Kennedy, 1914-1942

Personal Data *death: 9/1970*
 Ordinations *elder: 7/1/1905; apostle: 7/3/14*
 Leadership *Quorum of Twelve Apostles President: 1922-27*

Brother James C. Cowan, 1920-1945

Personal Data *birth: 1876; baptism: 1906; death: 1945*
 Ordinations *evangelist: 10/11/14; apostle: circa 1918, retired 1940, re-ordained 1944*

Brother James (Jim) Cowan was born in December 1876 and spent most of his life in the Monongahela, Pennsylvania area. It was said of him that his neighbors held him in high esteem because of his good works. He was the father of 14 children, four dying in their youth. He was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ in 1906 and ordained an elder shortly thereafter. He was ordained an evangelist in 1914 and subsequently to the office of an apostle. He retired as an apostle in 1940 but was re-ordained in 1944.

After his first wife, Martha, died, he married Clara Caldwell in 1944. That same year they moved to the Muncey Reservation in Ontario, Canada, where they took up residence on the farm owned by the Church to serve as missionaries to the Native Americans there. He died of a stroke in the hayfield on July 20, 1945.

An article in *The Gospel News* reporting on his death provides insight into his character:

The basic doctrine of Brother Cowan's life was the Golden Rule. . .
 . . If more people had known him, more people would have loved him.
 . . . He was an admirer of Abe Lincoln because of his humbleness and

brevity. He was devoted to his God, his wife, children, brethren and sisters and his fellowman. . . . He was opposed to anything that would bring wealth to the minority and hardship to the majority.

Brother Cowan, along with Brothers William H. Cadman and Teman Cherry, were on the committee when the Church building in Monongahela was built and he played an active part in it. His friendly smile and his hearty handclasp were the trademarks he shared with the Church for nearly 40 years.

Brother Ishmael D'Amico, 1923-1962

Personal Data	<i>birth: 1892; baptism: 1919; death: 1962</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: April 1920; evangelist: July, 1921; apostle: August, 1923</i>
Mission Work	<i>Detroit, Michigan; Sopris, Colorado; Rochester and Brooklyn, New York</i>
Publications	<i>author: autobiography—"My Testimony"</i>

Brother Ishmael D'Amico was born in Italy in 1892 and came to America in 1912. He met The Church of Jesus Christ at Glassport, Pennsylvania and was baptized in 1919. He was ordained an elder in April 1920, an evangelist in July 1921 and an apostle in August 1923. He soon became one of the most active and successful missionary workers in the Church. He, along with co-workers, founded the Church in various places. Shortly after being ordained an elder in 1920, Brothers D'Amico and Joseph Dulisse went to Detroit, Michigan, where, by the grace of God, a branch of the Church was started which eventually led to the establishment of six other branches in that area and Windsor, Canada.

Miraculously Protected

Brother D'Amico had many amazing experiences throughout his lifetime, but perhaps none was more remarkable than the one described below in his own words in his autobiography entitled *My Testimony*.

While employed in the construction of a building in Detroit, in November 1921, I was handing material to the bricklayer. I was standing on a board about one foot wide, which was supported by a scaffold, some distance from the ground. Suddenly the board upon which I stood broke and fell to the ground; but I remained standing in mid-air, safe and sound. I was neither injured nor afraid, and I glorified God that I was preserved, although the board had broken and fallen from under me. I then stepped over to other boards, which had not broken. It was just as if someone had held me up until I could reach a place of safety.

Later I was telling this experience in a testimony meeting here in Detroit. The Spirit of God descended on one of the brothers, and he saw in a vision that when the board had broken, the Lord Jesus Himself came and held me by my arms to keep me from falling. I thank our Lord again and again that He saved me from perishing.



Ishmael D'Amico

“Macedonian Call”

Brother D'Amico's concern for the souls of men and women urged him on to further efforts in the mission field. He went to Sopris, Colorado to deliver the Word of God, where eventually a few obeyed the Gospel message. After returning to Detroit it was only a short while before he again responded to the “Macedonian call,” which led him this time to Rochester, New York, where subsequently another branch of the Church was established.

During the years of 1931 through 1937, Brother D'Amico made missionary trips to Waterloo, Syracuse, and Palatine Bridge, New York, as well as to the Tuscarora and Tonawanda American Indian Tribes. In Brooklyn, New York, his efforts led to the establishment of another Mission.

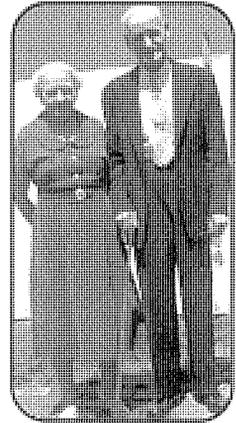
Later in life Brother D'Amico was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage, which stilled the voice of this wonderful preacher of the Restored Gospel. Grieving saints throughout the Church earnestly fasted and prayed for his recovery, but to no avail, as he never recovered from this affliction, which claimed his life on January 11, 1962. Brother D'Amico left behind his wife, Julia, and his six children: Ansel, Alfred, Lauretta, John, Erma, and Paul, to mourn his loss.

Brother Charles Behanna, 1923-1970

Personal Data *birth: 1880; baptism: 1898; death: 1970*

Ordinations *elder: 1/10/04; evangelist: July 1909; apostle: 8/8/23, retired: 1940, re-ordained: 1948*

Brother Charles Behanna was born on July 27, 1880 in Webster, Pennsylvania to Abraham and Rebecca Behanna. He married Margaret Young Ferguson on December 10, 1902. Together they had five children: Archetta, Charles, Mary Rebecca, Archibald Hermes, and Margaret Elaine. He and his wife raised a granddaughter (Elaine Evans) when her parents died shortly after her birth. He lived in Monongahela, Pennsylvania except for his last 21 years when he resided with his daughter, Mary Mancini, in Erie, Pennsylvania until his death in 1970.



Margaret and Charles Behanna

Brother Behanna was a hard worker and a good provider for his family. He worked in construction, was a part owner of a coalmine, a machinist, and a security guard. He was a very devout and faithful member

of The Church of Jesus Christ whose leadership was instrumental in the purchase of a building to establish the mission in Erie.

Brother Joseph Dulisse, 1934-1950

Personal Data *birth: 1879; baptism: 1918; death: 1950*
 Ordinations *elder: April 1920; evangelist: July 1921; apostle: July 1934*
 Leadership *General Church Second Counselor: 1939-50*
 Mission Work *Detroit, Michigan*

Brother Joseph Dulisse was born in Italy in 1879. After immigrating to the United States, he met The Church of Jesus Christ in Glassport, Pennsylvania. He was baptized into the Church in 1918 at the Rock Run Branch. He was ordained an elder in April 1920 and an evangelist in July 1921.

Brother Joseph was energetic in spreading the Gospel. In 1921 he traveled to Detroit, Michigan with Brother Ishmael D'Amico to help establish the Gospel there. He served as the presiding elder of Branch #2 for many years. This is on the West Side of Detroit, which started the vast expansion that took place in that city. He was a real pillar of the Gospel.

He was ordained an apostle in July 1934 and was elected Second Counselor of the General Church in July 1939, serving in that office until his death in 1950.

He was married to Sister Vincenze Dulisse. They had four sons, John, Peter, Nicholas, and Dominic.

Brother Rocco Biscotti, 1939-1987

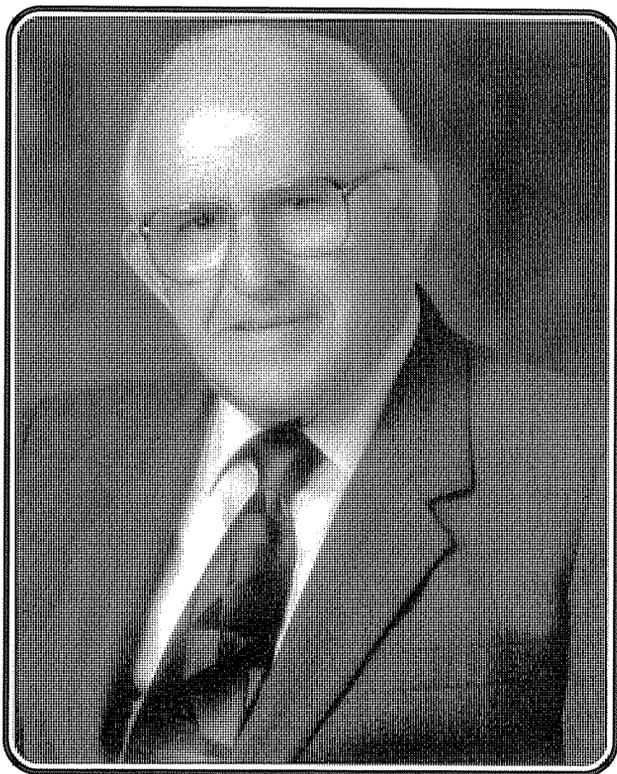
Personal Data *birth: 2/11/03; baptism: 8/27/22; death: 1/21/87*
 Ordinations *elder: 1923; evangelist: 1926; apostle: 1939*
 Leadership *Quorum of Twelve Apostles President: 1971-74*
 Mission Work *Italy, Atlantic Coast*
 Publications *author: Autobiography—"My Life with Christ"*

Brother Rocco Biscotti was born in the province of Foggia, Italy on February 11, 1903. He immigrated to the United States in April 1920 and went to live with his brother, Louis, in Cleveland, Ohio. Louis worked with a brother in the Church, Emil Gerome, and, at his invitation, they both began to attend services. After attending just two Sunday services, young Rocco requested his baptism. While he was changing into baptismal clothes, he asked the Lord to bear evidence that this was His Will and His Church. This was the first time he had ever prayed, and he immediately came under conviction, shedding tears of joy. It was on that day, August 27, 1922, that he made a covenant to serve the Lord for the rest of his life.

Shortly thereafter, he met his future wife, Sister Angeline Thomas, who had been baptized the previous year. They were married on June 17, 1925 and were blessed with three children, Matthew, Kathryn and Robert.

Brother Rocco was ordained an elder in 1923, an evangelist in 1926, and an apostle at the July 2, 1939 General Church Conference by Brother Alma Cadman. He served as Secretary, Vice President, and President of the Quorum of Twelve. He was very missionary-minded and traveled three times to Italy on missionary trips. He was also involved with the establishment of the Church on the Atlantic Coast.

His desire was to fulfill the words of the Apostle Paul in II Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Surely he received this "Crown" on January 21, 1987 when he passed away from this life. Additional details on his life may be obtained by reading his autobiography in a booklet entitled, *My Life with Christ*.



Joseph Lovalvo

Brother Joseph Lovalvo, 1939-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 3/1/10; baptism: 7/16/33</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: January 1936; evangelist: July 1937; apostle: July 1939</i>
Leadership	<i>California District Mission Board Chairman: 1963-83; California District President; Quorum of Twelve Apostles President: 1974-present;</i>
Mission Work	<i>Six Nations and Sarnia Indian Reservations, Canada; Mexico</i>
Publications	<i>co-author: "Fasting and Prayer" booklet</i>

Joseph Lovalvo was born near Palermo, Sicily, on March 1, 1910. He was the seventh of nine children. His father came to this country ahead of them and worked for two years to earn enough money to bring the family here. He worked on the railroad, sleeping in railroad cars so that he could save more money. In 1914, just before the start of WWI,

they finally embarked on their long-awaited and perilous voyage to America, which took 18 days in stormy weather.

Years later he became disenchanted with the church he had been attending since he was a boy. Having an inquiring mind, he would often ask questions of the parish priest regarding teachings that were troubling to him. However, his questions were lightly dismissed, as he was simply told to just accept it and was given no explanation from scripture. This did not satisfy him, and he eventually left that church. An account of his conversion into the Church may be found in Chapter Four.

Two of his mentors in those early days in the Church were Brothers Tony Pietrangelo and Ralph Frammolino. It wasn't long before his dedication led to active involvement in the Church.

“I Am Michael, the Archangel”

Brother Joe served the Windsor Branch for many years as presiding elder. In 1939, the Quorum of Twelve had a revelation at a June conference in Monongahela, PA to recommend Brother Joe to be ordained an apostle. When Brother Furnier laid hands upon him, the gift of tongues was spoken, with the interpretation being that God had called him as one of the apostles of old. However, at only 29 years of age, Brother Joe was beginning to feel the awesome weight of this office and began to wonder how he could carry this weight. The following day, after returning home from work, he went to his bedroom and began to ponder on how he could fulfill this great responsibility. What happened next is best described in Brother Joe's own words:

All of a sudden the Power of God came upon me and lifted me up from my bed and upon my feet in the middle of the room. A personage appeared to me, dressed all in white, with a sword in his hand. He spoke these words: “I am Michael, the archangel, and I have been sent to you by God, to teach you how to use this sword.” He then proceeded to put the sword in my hand. It was about three feet long, two-edged, and the hilt was all engraved in gold. As I took the sword, he held his hand on mine and the Power of God came upon me, and the Glory of God filled my soul. The sword just came alive! It was as if I had just grabbed

a 220-volt wire. All of a sudden, I found myself back in bed, wondering what was happening to me. Again the Power of God picked me up and stood me on my feet, and the same personage appeared. He repeated, "I am Michael, the archangel, God has sent me to you to teach you how to use this sword. Paul and Peter used this sword. Now you must use it." He put the sword in my hand and this time, he let me go. He didn't hold my hand. The Glory and the Power of God came upon me and once again, the sword became alive. All fear and every doubt left me. I knew now that God had called me as one of the twelve apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Joe has had many outstanding experiences associated with his ministry, which now spans over 65 years. One of the gifts he received early in his ministry was the gift of healing, which has been a blessing to many over the years. It didn't take long for this gift to be made manifest as reflected in the following experience, which occurred in 1936. Brother Joe explains in his own words:

I was just a young elder at the time. It was 1 o'clock in the morning when I was suddenly awakened from my sleep. A voice spoke to me, "Get up and get dressed and go to Sister Marietta Ruzzi's house. Go there and anoint her because she's been sick, very sick." We were taught to prove the spirits, so I was wondering where this voice came from, when the voice spoke again. This time like a command: "Arise and go there. She's been very sick. Anoint her and I will heal her." Well, I didn't wait any more.

They lived about a mile from my house. Brother Tony, her husband, who was also a minister of the Church, answered the door. I told him that I had an experience to go there and apologized for the lateness of the hour. He said, "Brother Joe, if God gave you an experience, come on in." I asked, "Is your wife sick?" He said, "She's been very sick. She's been in a coma for two weeks."

In those days we didn't have any insurance, jobs were scarce, and we had no money for doctors. So he waited on the Lord. He took me into the bedroom and there she was lying on the bed in a coma. I got down on my knees and cried out to God with all the energy that was in me, with all the faith that I could produce, and when I finished my prayer, tears were trickling down her face. She came out of the coma and started to praise God. She said, "Brother Joe, God has sent you to my home, because while you were here talking with my husband, I had a

vision where I saw a light come from your house and land in my house.” She wanted to get up and I suggested she just rest, to which she replied, “Oh no, I’m healed and I want to get up and fix you some coffee.” When I got home that night I told my wife what happened and we glorified God together.

Another noteworthy experience happened around 1952. Brother Joe received a call one evening after work from Sister Elvira Maness, a Native American from the Sarnia Mission. According to Brother Joe:

She was crying on the phone, “Brother Joe, my husband had an accident. He was working on the railroad cars and they were moving steel bars from one car to another. The operator of the crane moved the crane the wrong way and the steel beam hit Brother Maness in the chest and knocked him off the car. He has eight broken ribs and a broken ankle. I’m sick in bed with the flu, with a high fever.”

Brother Joe, another brother who was visiting their home, and his son Leonard responded to her appeal for help, and set out for the Sarnia Reservation. It was about a 75-mile drive, one-way. Brother Joe continues:

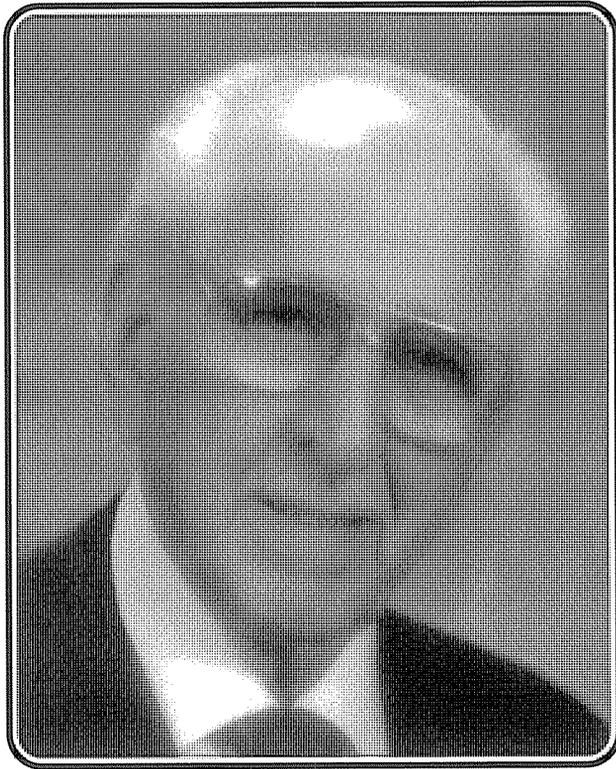
It was cold—close to zero degrees, so when Brother Maness saw me walk in, he started to cry. I knelt down and cried out to God. I reminded God that this was one of his covenant children, and that he had promised in the last days that he would minister to them. I asked God to send one of the Nephites mentioned in the Book of Mormon to minister to him. After I got off my knees and began to anoint him, a man walked in right through the door that was closed. I could see that he was a Native American. He had long black hair, with olive-colored skin. As he laid his hands on top of mine, the Power of God came upon me. I wasn’t speaking anymore, but Christ was speaking through me. I said, “Brother Maness, in the Name of Jesus Christ, receive ye the strength of God and be made whole.” And he jumped out of the chair and said, “Brother Joe, I’m healed. I’m healed. I have no more pain.” He was touching his ribs, “The pain is gone,” he said.

Brother Joe also anointed Sister Maness that night and she too was healed, but, as it turned out, the experience did not end there. He went to

the Sarnia Mission on the following Sunday and was stunned to see that Brother Maness still had the cast on his foot. Brother Maness told him that for some reason his chest was healed but his ankle was not. Brother Joe felt very bad and couldn't understand why he was not completely healed. He prayed for understanding and it didn't take long before the Lord spoke again. Brother Joe received a call from Brother Maness. According to Brother Joe:

He said, "Brother Joe, I have a message for you from Jesus Christ." I said, "Wait a minute—from Jesus Christ? What are you talking about?" "Yesterday, when you left here, we saw how bad you felt and we prayed for you. Last night, after I went to bed, Christ appeared to me and He told me to tell you not to be discouraged; the reason he didn't heal my ankle was because He wanted me to stay home and study the Book of Mormon and learn about the covenants God has made with my forefathers." When I heard that, the Spirit of God came upon me and I praised God for answering my prayer.

As of this writing, Brother Joe is the senior member of the Quorum of Twelve, having served in that office for over 60 years, second in length of service only to the late Brother Alma Cadman. His contributions to the Church over that period of time cannot be overstated. His love for the "Seed of Joseph," referring to the descendants of the original inhabitants of the land of America—the "Native Americans," is well known throughout the Church, and, in fact, was the primary reason for his decision to move his family to California in 1953. His preaching and teaching have provided the members of the Church with inspiration and direction wherever he has gone. Brother Joe and his wife, Sister Virginia (Randazzo), had four children: Leonard, Rose, Sharon, and Faye.



V. James Lovalvo

Brother V. James Lovalvo, 1941-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 1911; baptism: 7/16/33;</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 1935; evangelist: July 1937; apostle: July 1941</i>
Leadership	<i>California District President: 1954-63; Florida District President: 1973-77; GC Second Counselor: 1974-1992</i>
Publications	<i>author: "A Dissertation on the Faith and Doctrine," "Truth Shall Spring Out of the Earth," "Book of Mormon Perspective," "In Defense of The Book of Mormon," and "Baptism: Its History Past and Present;" composer: several hymns in Saints Hymnal and Saints Favorites</i>

As of this writing, Brother V. James Lovalvo has served in the Quorum of Twelve for over 60 years. He has been blessed with a deep understanding of the scripture, serving the Church as a gifted and active teacher as well as a prolific writer for many years. To date, he has authored several

books and pamphlets, covering many topics related to the faith and doctrine of the Church. His contributions to the understanding of the saints on subjects such as the Apostasy and the Restoration have been extensive. He worked on the committee to compile the Church's hymnbook, *The Saints Hymnal*, and has written several hymns, which have been enjoyed by the Church over the years. Brother Loalvo has provided leadership at all levels of the Church, serving as presiding elder in Branch #4 in Detroit, Michigan as well as in the San Fernando Valley and Lindsay Branches in California; as president in two districts of the Church, California and Florida, for a total of 13 years; and as second counselor to the President of the General Church for a period of 18 years. He has promoted many worthy causes and initiatives in the Church, not the least of which has been the establishment of a more effective and systematic training program for ministers. His testimony follows:

I was born of parents who were Catholics, and though they were good to me, yet I was not taught to be religiously-minded. I was a member of a large family, which consisted of six boys and three girls. We were all born in Italy with the exception of my younger brother Anthony. I was two years old when we landed in the U.S.A., consequently I remember nothing about Italy. . . .

I grew up to be a lover of music and at the age of . . . sixteen I began to study voice culture, and since God had blessed me with a good singing voice, I began to aspire for an operatic career. I studied with the famous Dr. William Howland of the Institute of Musical Art in Detroit, Michigan. I have sung before hundreds of people both on the stage and radio. I was under contract with Dr. Howland, and when I was about to realize my musical ambitions, I came in contact with The Church of Jesus Christ, which I readily accepted with all my heart and which also changed my life and worldly aspirations.

A more detailed account of Brother Jim's conversion, along with his brothers, Joseph and Anthony, may be found in Chapter Four. All three were baptized on July 16, 1933.

“Sing unto the Lord a New Song”

Brother Jim’s testimony continues:

My spiritual joy seemed complete except for the fact that I still continued to study voice, looking forward to a successful operatic career. . . . My heart told me that to continue my natural study was wrong in the sight of God, but my flesh fought against it. I sought God daily in fasting and prayer to help me that I might be released from any worldly attractions or thing that would make it hard for me to serve Him.

One day as I opened the Bible my finger rested upon the word “sing.” I immediately thought that this was His answer to my prayer and that God was pleased if I continued my studies. . . . I continued my singing, but all the enthusiasm, all the desire for achieving worldly glory began to ebb away from my heart. Nine months after I had been baptized I forsook my studies. . . . I remembered about the incident when my finger had rested upon the word “sing” in the Bible; and, being aroused in curiosity, I looked in the same chapter, which was Psalm I49:I, and read, “Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.” I felt the glorious blessings of God when I read this beautiful chapter, and I promised God I would indeed seek to use my voice for His praise. I was hated by my father because I forsook my studies, my friends deserted me; my father slapped my face upon more than one occasion, but I thanked the Lord that I was now being persecuted for having chosen Him instead of the world. My brothers and I prayed for my father, and, after a few months had passed away, we were blessed to see my father and mother obey the Gospel. . . .

“Young Men of Valor”

Over the years Brother Loalvo has had many wonderful experiences. The following experience prepared him, while yet a young man, for God’s plans for his life:

The young men of our branch volunteered to clean the church for a period of six months. We used to go to the church on Saturday morning to do that work. We fasted and prayed while cleaning the building. One Saturday, after all the young men had left, my brother Joseph, Mark Randy and I decided to remain in church to pray a little longer. We went to the front of the auditorium on the left side of the rostrum and knelt in fervent prayer. While we were praying, all three of

us heard the front door of the church open and footsteps coming towards us. We, at the time, thought it might be one of the brothers returning to pray with us. We continued praying and, while doing so, heard whoever had come in arise and lay his hands on us. As he did so, we felt a wonderful blessing come upon us. We arose from praying rejoicing in the Lord for His mercy, and, when we looked around to see who had come in the church, we saw no one. . . .

On the way home we stopped at Sister Ruzzi's home to pay her a visit. While conversing with her, she asked us if anything unusual had happened at church. We all asked, "Why?" 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 on the left side of the rostrum. While you were praying, a large man clothed in white entered the church, and, coming where you were, knelt with you. Then, he arose, and laid his hands on Brother Jim, then on Brother Joe, and then on Brother Mark. He also laid a crown on each of your heads." When she told us this, we related to her what we had experienced. We received a glorious blessing in her home that day.

In 1936 Brother Loyalvo married Sister Mary Randazzo, daughter of Brother Sam and Sister Farah Randazzo of Detroit, Michigan. God blessed their marriage with two children, Leonard James and Priscilla (Penny).

"They Shall Lay Hands on the Sick and They Shall Recover"

This promise of Christ to His disciples found in Mark 16:18 has been fulfilled many times in The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Loyalvo recalls one such instance while on missionary work in Saginaw, Michigan with his wife and children:

On the way home we stopped somewhere and drank some water which came from a well. The day after we returned home, one of my children became very ill with pains in the stomach, nausea, vomiting, etc. 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, and suggested our illness was due to the well water we had drunk at Saginaw. On the following Sunday morning, we asked the

elders of the church who were visiting us to anoint us according to the church ordinance. They prayed with all the sincerity of their hearts; however, 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 pain throughout my body. We were also burning with a very high fever.

I placed my children on our bed, then picked my wife from off the floor and put 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 wise, 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 awakened from her faint completely healed, and my two children stopped crying, as they, too, were miraculously made whole. We all knelt in prayer of thanksgiving to God who had mercifully healed us. From that moment on we were no longer ill. The doctor, also, was amazed at our sudden recovery.

Brother Angelo A. Corrado, 1941-1985

Personal Data *birth: 7/26/03; baptism: 1/7/23; death: 1985*
 Ordinations *elder: 7/15/23; evangelist: 7/17/27; apostle: 7/20/41*
 Mission Work *Italy*

Brother Angelo (Tony) Corrado was born in the town of Bugnara, in the province of L'Aquila, Italy, on July 26, 1903. He was the only child of Joseph and Almerinda Corrado. In his childhood he was brought up a Catholic, the only church in the city. He went to church often and took part, singing in the choir. He had a desire to become a priest, so he could deliver a sermon himself; however, the opportunity to do so never presented itself for financial reasons. When he was six his father went to America, and his mother tried to raise him as best she could. At the age of 14, he finished public school and worked part time with his uncle as a carpenter and also helped on the farm where he lived.

A Miraculous Deliverance

Early in the morning of January 13, 1915, as nine-year-old Angelo was getting ready to go to school, an earthquake took place, demolishing part of their stone house. He tried to get out, but was trapped inside until it was over. He testified that if he had gone out through the door he would have been crushed beneath the rocks. He knows that the Lord spared his life at a young age for a reason.

In 1918, his father came in contact with some of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ in the State of Pennsylvania, and soon became a member of the Church. He wrote to the family and tried to explain the joy and satisfaction he found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but they thought he had made a foolish move and mocked him.

In 1920, Brother Tony's father invited him to join him in America. His mother decided to let him go, although it was against her will. She said to him, "Go and try to persuade your father to come back home." Brother Tony boarded a ship in Naples, Italy, on October 1, 1920, and arrived in New York City on October 19.

Rift Between Father and Son Healed

Angelo made his home in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, where he found employment. He tried to persuade his father to go back to Italy, but was told he would never leave The Church of Jesus Christ. His father talked to him about the Gospel and the joy he found in serving a true and living God, but Tony did not believe him. He testified that his heart was like a stone and that he began to dislike his father and didn't want to be with him anymore.

Eventually he moved to Youngstown, Ohio. As time went on, he became more bitter toward his father. His father tried to visit him several times, but, when he knew he was coming, he would not let him find him at home. The bitterness he felt grew until it reached the point where he wanted to take away his life. Brother Tony later thanked the Lord that, as he was about to follow through with these intentions, his father's prayers were answered.

In the latter part of December 1922, through some of the saints in Niles, it was made possible for him to meet his father again. At that time, the bitterness of his heart began to melt away, and he even began to attend church services in Niles.

It was at a conference in Glassport, Pennsylvania, on January 7, 1923, where the spirit of repentance came upon him, and he asked to be baptized. He was baptized in the Monongahela River by Brother Caesar Talamonti.

On July 15, 1923, Brother Tony was ordained an elder. On November 21, 1923, he married Sister Angeline Damore, and from that union they had two daughters, Irene and Amelia. On July 17, 1927 he was ordained an evangelist and on July 20, 1941, an apostle. This was the fulfillment of a dream he received in 1934 in which his late father, who had also been an apostle, passed the mantle of his office to him.

Sister Angeline passed away on November 3, 1948, and on April 26, 1952 Brother Tony married Sister Mary Guerriere. Together they had a daughter, Annette.

Missionary Trip to Italy

Brother Tony's desire to return to Italy to visit his mother and share his testimony with her and others was fulfilled in June of 1955. While there, he was informed by his mother, whom he hadn't seen for 35 years, that there were two groups of people who wanted to kill him. He told her, "I am serving a true and living God, and He is able to protect me. I know that my work is not yet finished, and they cannot do me any harm."

His ministry to the sick and the needy, especially those who were confined to a hospital bed, bore much fruit. It can well be said of him that he was a man of mighty prayer. His presence and influence covered many years of faithful service by the time he was called to his heavenly reward in 1985.

Brother Samuel Kirschner, 1941-1978

Personal Data *birth: 3/15/01; baptism: 4/12/31; death: 4/7/78*

Ordinations *elder: January 1934; evangelist: January 1937; apostle: July 1941*

Brother Samuel Kirschner was born in a little village known as Dobsina in Hungary on March 15, 1901. His parents, Michael and Sophia Kirschner, were of German descent. They were poor but honest and were held in high respect by all. He had a very difficult childhood, and it was only by God's love and protection that he attained manhood. His mother and father immigrated to the United States when he was five years of age. Sam, his two brothers and one sister stayed in Hungary and were raised by their maternal grandmother for the next four years. He testified later that, during that time he became a hard-

ened little boy. He had little to eat, sometimes only a piece of white side bacon and a dry piece of bread. He got a cup of coffee every Christmas and Easter, and only on those occasions did he receive any other special treats. He worked hard and gathered wood in the forest so they could survive the winters. He grew up not remembering his father and mother and with little of the love and affection a young child needs at that age. Beyond that, he knew nothing of the love of Jesus, and he began to take out his anger and frustrations on some of his playmates.

When he was nine, his parents sent for their children and they came to America by ship, traveling on to Monongahela where their family was finally reunited. His mother was so overjoyed to see him that she began to laugh and cry at the same time, kissing him over and over again. He said that there was a nobility about his mother, which proved to be his



Samuel Kirschner

preservation from degradation and dishonor. The family lived in a coal mining camp named Hazel Kirk, about three miles from Monongahela.

The Hard Lessons of the World

Although young Sam now had the love and affection of his mother, his life continued to be difficult. The other children were rough and abusive to the new foreign “greenhorns,” as they were called. He spoke only Hungarian and German but quickly learned to speak fluent English. It was during this time that he witnessed gunfights, beatings with pick handles and bats, attacks with razors, and even saw one man killed.

Faced with Amputation

When he was twelve, Sam was critically injured in a bus accident. His leg was badly shattered and almost completely severed. The doctors said the leg would have to be amputated or he would die. He would not consent to amputation, choosing to die first. When his mother saw his determination, she pleaded with another doctor to do something for him. Blood poisoning and gangrene had already set in and the doctor thought it hopeless, but agreed to try. The doctor’s caring and warmth touched him deeply, as these were qualities that had been conspicuously absent in the rough environment in which he had been raised.

After his recovery, he quit school and went to work in the coalmines, remaining there for 11 years. He testified later that the Lord saved him from what seemed to be certain death on several occasions, even though he was ignorant of the Lord.

“A Man of the World”

Brother Sam testified that, although he was raised in the Lutheran Church and was baptized at age 12, he never understood the plan of salvation and never had a relationship with the Lord. There was a time in his life when he even exclaimed, with great conviction, “Surely, there is no God.” In his late teens he had become a “man of the world” and the “life of the party.” He loved sports, never refused to play cards and dice,

never refused to drink anything that was offered, danced, and shot a “mean game of pool.”

However, it was at this time he met the love of his life, Ruth Cowan, the daughter of Apostle James Cowan, and they were married on March 19, 1924. They eventually had nine children: Beatrice, Raymond, Norman, Vernon, Paul, William, Charlotte, Karl, and James.

His mother-in-law wanted him to know something about The Church of Jesus Christ and introduced him to The Book of Mormon. He began to read it but soon lost interest. However, he did attend MBA services at Monongahela and began to associate with the young people’s group there. He had already begun to lose his love for the world and to enjoy his new friends.

A Remarkable Healing in the Face of Death

During a baseball game at a Sunday School picnic, Sam was hit in the shin bone of his bad leg and had to drop out of the game. Several days later, the leg became inflamed and blood poisoning set in. His condition worsened and it appeared that he might die. He was delirious and in severe pain much of the time, but, during a clear moment, he told his wife to call for all of his relatives to come and say good-bye as he felt he was going to die. Brother Cowan came and anointed him. Immediately, the pain left him, and he began to hear the most beautiful music he had ever heard. The chimes that he was hearing were clear and perfect, as he imagined them to be the golden bells of heaven. He recovered, but still had no desire to be baptized into the Church.

“His Eyes Kept Looking Deep into Me”

Five years later, he and his family attended an Easter program at the Church. It was here that he had an experience that led to his conversion. In his words:

I had only been there a few moments when some of the girls came to me asking me to take part in the program as all the parts had been filled with the exception of this one. Sarah Neill was one of these girls,

having a Bible in her hand, telling me what part I was to take. I answered her that I certainly would not care to participate, as I did not know anything about the Bible nor [did I believe] in it. But, when they in their persistence broke me down, I accepted with some apprehension. The scripture I was to read was Mark 16: 9 - 15. It was really a nice service, but I wished I would have no part in it. But alas my turn came, my name being called, and I stood up to read. I read very well until I got to the middle of the 14th verse, when suddenly I stopped, and to my amazement, instead of looking on the page of the Bible, I was looking directly into the room of which I had read. There I saw the apostles, and Jesus, standing at the entrance to the room, but the door was shut. I saw Jesus looking upon each one of the apostles, and each in turn felt rebuked and ashamed. Though Jesus opened not his mouth, Jesus continued turning until he looked directly at me. Then I, too, felt rebuked of his displeasure for my unbelief.

I was amazed, as never in my thirty years had I a vision of any kind. And then suddenly I couldn't stand any more. I wanted to cry but was ashamed to. And so I thought to get hold of myself by setting my teeth and clenching my hands on the book, but I could not. The result was that I turned my back upon the congregation and broke down and cried like a child. The whole room seemed to fill with something. Suddenly I heard a man's voice, very powerful, and then another. The first I did not understand, the second stood up and shouted, "Praise God." And then I had strength enough to go to my seat, but I never did finish reading that verse. After the meeting, I was told that a Brother Vancik (the first man to speak) spoke in the unknown tongue, and that the interpretation was also given: Thus if I would obey the Gospel, that what I had received (in this meeting) would be only a taste of what I would receive. Though I was a Christian all my life, yet never had I had such things revealed to me before. I had heard of the unknown tongues, but now I both heard and saw the wonderful operation of the Spirit of God. Truly, I was troubled.

I went home, and the next morning went to work trying to make myself believe my mind had played tricks on me. But I never could forget the look on the face of Jesus. His eyes. Yes, that is what it was. His eyes kept looking deep into me, until I had to cry out "have mercy on me." At the end of the week, I was ready to give my life to Him who called me. And so it came to pass that on April 12, 1931 I was baptized by immersion in the Monongahela River by Brother Teman Cherry. My wife was also baptized with me. This was an answer to her prayers, for she [had] wanted me to go to Church from the beginning of our life

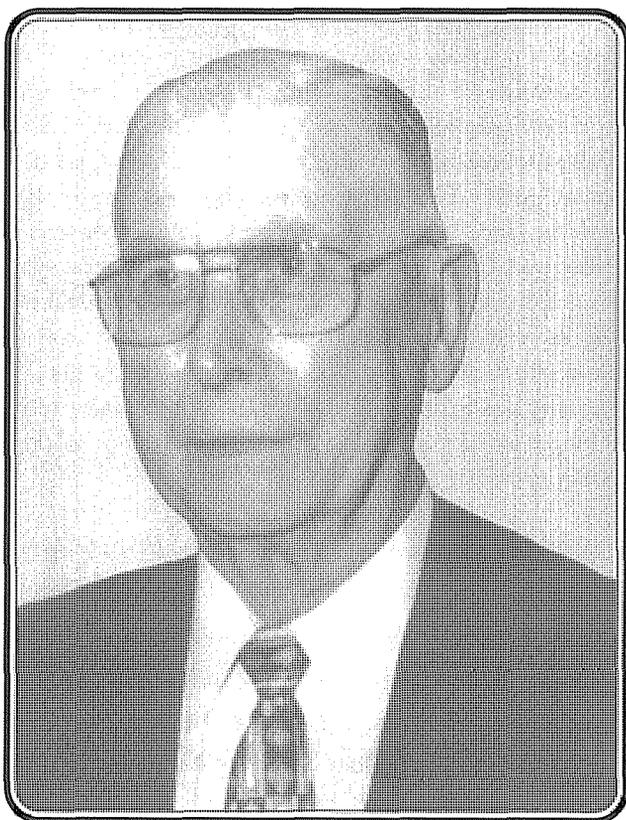
together. What happened to me is one of the greatest miracles that can befall anyone. As I have already written what manner of man I was before this conversion, I shall now testify that the man I was surely died, and I was raised again but in newness of life. Behold, the Bible, which I hardly believed, became my daily bread and Jesus the Bread of Life to me. Oh how He did bless me. I was no longer ignorant of Him. He walked with me [and] I talked to Him. He came to abide with me, and my fellowship and communion with Him were indeed heavenly. I lost the world completely when I found Christ. My friends would ask about me and for me and I would send back an answer, "The son that you know is dead, you shall no more see him as you once knew him." And so one by one they passed by, for I had become as a stranger to them. I could no longer partake with them of the simple things of this world. Thus I began preaching Christ to all.

Brother Sam was ordained an elder in January 1934, an evangelist in January 1937, and an apostle in July 1941. Until his death on April 7, 1978, he labored diligently for the Church and his Lord. A tribute written in his honor in *The Gospel News* quoted I Corinthians 4:15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." It was noted that Brother Sam Kirschner was truly a spiritual father to many in the Gospel of Christ.

Brother Joseph Bittinger, 1953-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 8/20/02; baptism: 8/10/30</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 4/11/31; evangelist: 9/29/40; apostle: 4/19/53</i>
Leadership	<i>GC Second Counselor: 1956-74; GC Finance Committee Chairman: 1964-70; GC Mission Board Chairman: 1959-69; Foreign Missions Committee Chairman: 1976-84; Pennsylvania District President; Florida District President: 1981-1982</i>
Mission Work	<i>Standing Rock Indian Reservation, South Dakota; Nigeria and Ghana, Africa</i>

Brother Joseph Bittinger was born August 20, 1902 on a farm near Swanton, Garrett County, Maryland. He was the eldest of ten children born to Harrison and Alice Bittinger. At an early age Brother Joe experienced the drudgery and laborious chores associated with the life of a



Joseph Bittinger

poor farm boy. There were no schools near the Bittinger home, which deprived him of several years of formal instruction. When a school was finally constructed near his home, he eagerly attended and worked hard to make up for lost time. However, much to his regret, he had to quit school at 15 to work in the coal mines with his father. It was then that he began a lifetime of self-education, much of which, at a later time, was derived from his study of the scriptures.

As a young lad, he was religiously inclined and enjoyed attending Sunday School and Church services whenever he could. His parents were members of the Church of the Brethren but he never joined. However, in his early teenage years he did become a member of the Pentecostal Church, being baptized by immersion in a nearby river.

In 1920 he married Lydia Platter Duckworth, a widow and mother of six children. They had one son and two daughters, one of which died in infancy. He continued working as a coal miner, but life was very difficult for them as they struggled against the hardships of poverty. In May of 1920, they decided to move from Maryland to Smock, Pennsylvania in hopes that things would be better there. He quickly found work at the H. C. Frick Coke Company Coal Mine and moved into a company house at Bitner, Pennsylvania in July.

The Transforming Power of God

Soon he became acquainted with John Edwards, who was the company foreman and manager of the Bitner Plant and, more importantly, an elder in The Church of Jesus Christ at Smock, Pennsylvania. Brother Edwards was holding meetings in his home in Bitner, along with Apostle Martin King. The Bittingers soon began to attend those services where they heard the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ preached for the first time.

He was deeply impressed with the simplicity of the Gospel and with the miracles he had witnessed and yearned for God's presence in his life. His wife was baptized on April 4, and Brother John Edwards baptized him on August 10, 1930. The Bittingers became members of the Mission established at Bitner under the Monongahela Branch of the Church. In April 1931, Brother William H. Cadman ordained him an elder. He was elected Presiding Elder of the Bitner Mission in 1933 and served in that capacity until 1956 with only one brief period of relief. Of that period Brother Joe testified he experienced many wonderful blessings in their meetings as God's miraculous power was manifested. Brother Robert Frye, who had lain in a state of unconsciousness for many days, testified that, "When Brother Bittinger anointed and prayed for me, I was restored to life again."

Brother Joe began to hold meetings in the home of his parents near Maryland, and in 1939, his father, mother and other members of the family were baptized into the Church. That same year he had to leave the

mines because of a bad back and went into other means of employment for a period of time. He went into semi-retirement in 1965, and retired completely in 1970 in order to pursue the work of the Church more fully.

“Two are Better Than One . . .”

The words from Ecclesiastic 4:9, “Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor,” describe well the wonderful relationship that developed between Brother Joe and Brother William H. Cadman. In his own words:

My contact with Brother Cadman developed into a perpetual enduring relationship. This was a privilege to me far beyond expression. I feel that Oliver Cowdery reflected sentiments very similar to mine in his letter to W. W. Phelps when he stated, “To be permitted once more to travel with this brother (referring to Joseph Smith, Jr.) occasions reflections of no ordinary kind.”

Brother Cadman did not drive a car, and it was necessary for him to travel extensively to perform his labors as President of the General Church. It became my lot, a privilege of notable distinction, to drive far and near in travels with him. Our relationship was one that only death could separate. I loved him dearly. I respected him. The time I spent with him had a tremendous impact and influence in my life as he was to me the greatest example of a Saint. His example was one of eminent worth. All I can say is, “How Blest The Sacred Tie That Binds Believers’ Hearts In One!” This bond stimulated our love and developed our desires to work for God. We soon learned that our affection for the Indian people and the missionary work of God’s Church were preeminent; therefore, we visited with them as much as possible. This experience with Brother Cadman fulfilled my inward longings—to do the work of a Missionary. I was blessed and had no difficulty adjusting to any situation I found myself in.

Brother Joe was ordained into the Quorum of Seventy on September 29, 1940 by Brother Ernest Schultz, and into the Quorum of Twelve on April 19, 1953 by Brother Samuel Kirschner.

After the Bitner Branch dissolved in 1957, the Bittingsers attended the Monongahela Branch, where he had great liberty in traveling throughout the Church to uplift branches in Pennsylvania and other districts of the Church.

Brother Joe's wife of 44 years passed away in March of 1964. It was a very difficult time of loneliness for him, as Sister Lydia had always supported and encouraged him in anything he desired to do for the Church. She also would often join him in his travels whenever she could. The Lord provided for his need as Brother Joe went on to marry Sister Edna Barnhart in November of 1964. In 1973 they transferred to the Vanderbilt Branch and in 1979 moved to Florida, becoming members of the Fort Pierce Branch.

“He That Is Greatest Among You Shall Be Your Servant”

Brother Joe has put flesh on these words spoken by Christ so many years ago (Matthew 23:11). In 1951, he was elected a charter member of the General Church Finance Committee, serving as chairman from 1964 to 1970 and remaining on the committee until 1982. In April, 1956, he was elected second counselor of the General Church, serving for a total of 18 years—first under Brother Cadman; then under Brother Furnier; and finally under Brother Ciaravino. In 1959, the General Church Board of Missions was established and Brother Joe was elected to serve on that committee as well, serving as chairman for ten years. Later, in 1976, the Foreign Missions Committee was organized, and once again, Brother Joe was elected chairman, serving in that capacity until 1984. He also served as president of the Pennsylvania District, and later on, the Florida District from 1981 to 1982.

The Heart of a Missionary

Brother Joe has, without a doubt, been one of the Church's most active and productive missionaries of the 20th century. He has made countless trips throughout the United States and Canada in an effort to bring the Gospel to the Native-American and worked diligently in the

establishment of a mission of the Church on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in South Dakota at Wakpala. In 1954, he made his first trip to Nigeria with Brother William H. Cadman, making subsequent trips in 1958, 1974, and 1978, at which time he also visited Ghana.

Later on in life, Brother Joe wrote in 1982 of his love for missionary work:

My heart has always been sensitive in response to missionary work. To me it's the vital indispensable function and spiritual framework of the Gospel. . . . Surely any such pleasing labor before the Lord is worth far more than all the riches and glory of this world. After receiving the rewards, satisfaction, and fulfillment of my long-awaited desires, all I had been deeply concerned with were my responsibilities as an apostle and the Foreign Missions Committee. The Lord planted and sealed in my heart an abundance of love and compassion for the African missionary work. That love is alive today within me just as much as it was in 1952. This work dwells within me every day, in my heart, in my mind, wherever I am, it is with me. At the time of this writing, I am eighty years old. I realize my work is now limited, but time has not erased from my memory, neither has it removed from my heart, the cheering truth of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. My soul doth magnify the Lord, for He is great and His mercy endureth forever. The love of God bestowed upon me reveals His mercy, in that I have been permitted to be a part of the great and glorious Restoration work in these the latter days.

Brother Paul D'Amico, 1953-1993

Personal Data *birth: 6/26/23; baptism: 10/9/38; death: 12/5/93*
 Ordinations *elder: 7/14/46; evangelist: 7/27/49; apostle: 5/31/53*
 Publications *author: autobiography—"The Lord is My Shepherd"*

Brother Paul D'Amico dedicated his life to The Church of Jesus Christ. He was the youngest of six children born to Brother Ishmael and Sister Julia D'Amico. Quoting Brother Paul from his autobiography, *The Lord is My Shepherd*:

When I was only a few months old, I became seriously ill, even nigh unto death. During this illness, a sister saw a vision. She saw a man dressed in white take me from my crib and, as he reached the door, he lifted his eyes toward heaven in silent meditation; he then returned me to my crib. The good Lord saw fit to heal me from this affliction, for which I praise the Lord.

In Harm's Way during World War II

On January 26, 1943, Brother Paul was drafted into the United States Army to enter World War II. His observations were:

Perhaps the most prominent period of time during which I received His guidance, protection, and encouragement was while I was a member of the armed forces during World War II. Many times, I did not know what course to follow or how to proceed. Each time the Lord intervened in my behalf.

Brother Paul was discharged in February 1946. He was ordained an elder in July 1946, and moved to Brooklyn, New York with his mother and father in April 1947. In September 1947, he married Grace Simone, who worked with him throughout their 46 years of marriage in his responsibilities in the Church. They moved to Lockport, New York and were blessed with four children: Gary, Sharon, William, and Richard.

Ordained to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in His Twenties

In July 1949, he was called to the office of an evangelist and in April 1953, at the age of 29, was ordained an apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Paul traveled throughout the Church, encouraging and uplifting the saints in his very distinctive resounding voice that many still remember affectionately.

He served as presiding elder for many years in Lockport, New York and was secretary of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. He was a humble brother, who, when called to be an apostle wrote:

Words cannot possibly describe how humble and unworthy I felt in this calling. Years have gone by, and we have had many experiences in

which the Lord blessed us. We have spent our entire life in the service of God. My entry into and time in the Gospel of Christ have been the most important things in my life. There is just nothing to compare with the wonderful life we experience in the service of God.

Brother Paul passed from this life on December 5, 1993.

Brother William Gennaro, 1956-1973

Personal Data *birth: 9/18/1899; baptism: July 1924; death: 1973*

Ordinations *elder: 1927; evangelist: 1932; apostle: April 1956*

Brother William Gennaro was born on September 18, 1899, the son of Brother Frank and Sister Mary Gennaro, who came from Italy to the United States in 1895. He was born on a farm in Leetsdale, Pennsylvania, into a family of five children: three boys and two girls. His early years were spent at Leetsdale, until they moved to Glassport, Pennsylvania, and Youngstown, Ohio. From there the family moved to Warren, Ohio.

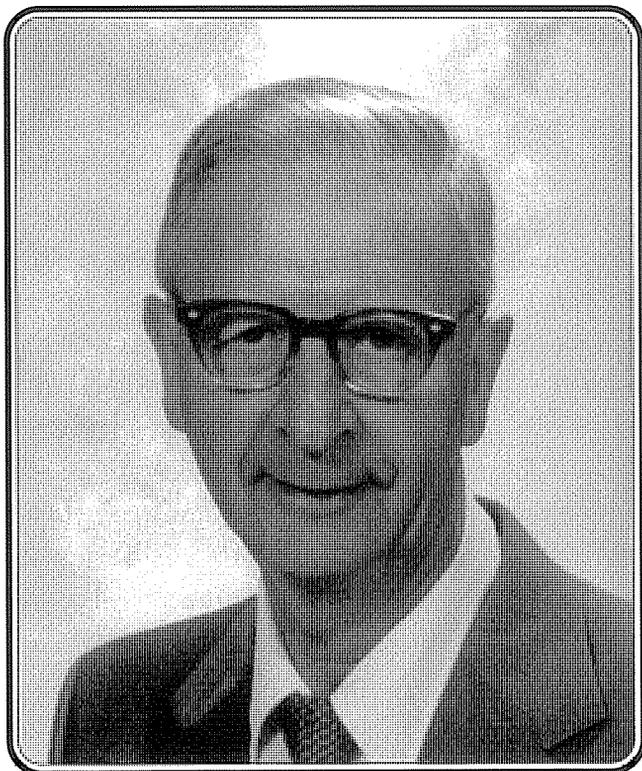
Carried into the Waters of Baptism

Brother Gennaro was baptized in July 1924, at the age of 25, in Niles, Ohio, by Brother Frank Nastasi. In his testimony, he says that he was so ill the brothers carried him to the waters of baptism and through the mercy of God, he fully recovered. In 1927 he was ordained an elder; in 1932, an evangelist; and in April 1956, an apostle.

He married the former Theresa Blank, of Lorain, Ohio, in September of 1925, and together they had two children, Betty Jane and Bill Jr., who gave them seven grandchildren.

In December of 1965, Brother Gennaro retired from active work as a foreman with the Copperweld Steel Co. of Warren, Ohio. He was then able to devote more time to the General Church, the Warren, Ohio, Branch, and also missionary work, especially in Kent, and Perry, Ohio. He served as Presiding Elder of the Warren Branch for 10 years during the period from 1930 to 1967.

Brother Bill became afflicted with Parkinson's Disease and, in April 1973, retired from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles because of failing health, stating there were other brothers who could fill the position more effectively. He passed away not long thereafter.



Russell Cadman

Brother Russell Cadman, 1956-Present

Personal Data *birth: 9/23/16; baptism: 5/5/46*
Ordinations *elder: 1/18/48; evangelist: 5/1/55; apostle: 4/29/56*
Leadership *Quorum of Twelve Apostle Vice President*

Brother Russell Cadman was born in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains at Hiwassa, Arkansas, on September 23, 1916, the eighth of

nine children born to Alma and Lavina Cadman. Three weeks later, they moved to Youngstown, Ohio, where they lived until 1920 when they moved to a farm four miles south of Greenville, Pennsylvania, located on the Shenango River. The family lived on that farm until 1937. Brother Russell remarks that he and his siblings had a very good childhood—the farm was in a pleasant valley with a beautiful river to play in. The family was in the dairy business and also grew fruit and vegetables. He attended a one-room schoolhouse near his home with eight grades and one teacher and later went to Penn High School in Greenville.

While growing up, he attended meetings conducted by his father, which were held in various homes of the saints. The children enjoyed the meetings very much. Young Russell had his first heavenly experience when he was about 12 years old. He saw his parents in a dream sitting in their kitchen, one on each side of a window, and his father quoting the Word of God as written in the Bible. His mother, with a Bible in her lap, was checking to make sure his father was correct. He noticed an angel there as well, nodding his head in agreement.

On March 12, 1936, he was united in marriage to Ethel Riley. They had four daughters, Carolyn Ethel Gehly, Esther Jean McCartney, Martha Mae Gehly, and Ellen Elizabeth Larimer. In 1937, his parents retired from farming and moved to Monongahela, while he and his family remained in the area. Russell worked on the family farm and also secured a job at the Greenville Steel Car Company where he worked as a fitter, welder, and chief security guard. In 1939, he purchased a farm from his father near Hamburg, Pennsylvania.

At this time he and his wife were attending meetings at a local protestant church. One of the ministers talked to them about joining their church, and Brother Russell asked for a book of their faith. He found their doctrine had little resemblance to the teachings of Christ, and they did not join that church.

He had several heavenly experiences concerning The Church of Jesus Christ and was shown his and his wife's baptisms into the Kingdom of God. He did not say anything to his wife about those experiences until the April Conference of 1946, at Youngstown, Ohio, and, in the after-

noon service, they were moved upon to request their baptisms. His father said that if they still felt the same way in a few weeks they should go to Monongahela and be baptized. In the following weeks, they repented and prepared themselves for baptism by studying the Word of God.

On Sunday, May 5, 1946, they were baptized at Monongahela by Brother Samuel Kirschner. Later that year they transferred to the Youngstown, Ohio Branch. Shortly thereafter, services began to be held in their home. The Youngstown Elders traveled approximately 70 miles each trip until a mission was established. There were members in that vicinity, including two elders, who remained from the time his father held meetings there in the 1930's. Brother Russell was ordained a teacher in 1947 and an elder in 1948.

“You Have Been Called to Be an Apostle”

In 1950, Brother Russell and Sister Ethel purchased a larger farm near Fredonia, Pennsylvania. He was ordained an evangelist in 1955 and an apostle in 1956. The year before he was ordained an apostle, he dreamed an apostle came to him, kissed him and said, “Brother Russell, you have been called to be an apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ.” A Church building was built in Fredonia in 1956 with the mission being organized into a Branch in 1959.

Over the years, the branch continued to grow and become firmly established. Brother Russell and Sister Ethel were blessed to see all of their daughters baptized and three of their sons-in-law become ministers in the Church. They have also been blessed with 12 grandchildren.

Six Generations in the Church

Brother Russell reflects upon his life in the Church and his hopes for the future:

We have had the wonderful privilege of having six generations of my grandfather's (William Cadman) family blessed in the Church, and an apostle of our family being in the Church since the first Twelve were ordained in 1862. I have made several missionary trips to South Dakota and other places to preach the Gospel to all who would listen. I enjoyed

preaching to both Gentile and Lamanite, as the angel said the Gospel was to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. We have seen the sick anointed and made well. We have been anointed and made well ourselves. We have witnessed the gifts of the Gospel and can say our experiences have been such that we and our children can testify, as our fathers before us, the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. We have obtained this glorious hope of eternal salvation that when we pass from this life we shall enter with the redeemed into paradise where all of the righteous who have lived on this earth from the time of Christ's resurrection await for the first resurrection when Christ shall come in His glory.

We look forward with an eye of faith for the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the promises made to both Israelite and Gentile. Not being blinded to the word, that if we transgress, we shall likewise perish as they in the days of old when they would not hearken to the word of God; [we know] that Zion will come with all the glory thereof spoken in the Word of God. I have seen the glory of the New Jerusalem that will be built on this land. I have seen the highways laid waste and the wayfaring man stop his traveling to and fro and the suffering that will take place to bring the downfall of all nations of this world. I have seen what must be accomplished that Zion may arise to its full glory; that Christ may come in before the Ancient of Days and receive His rightful place to reign over the House of Israel forever.

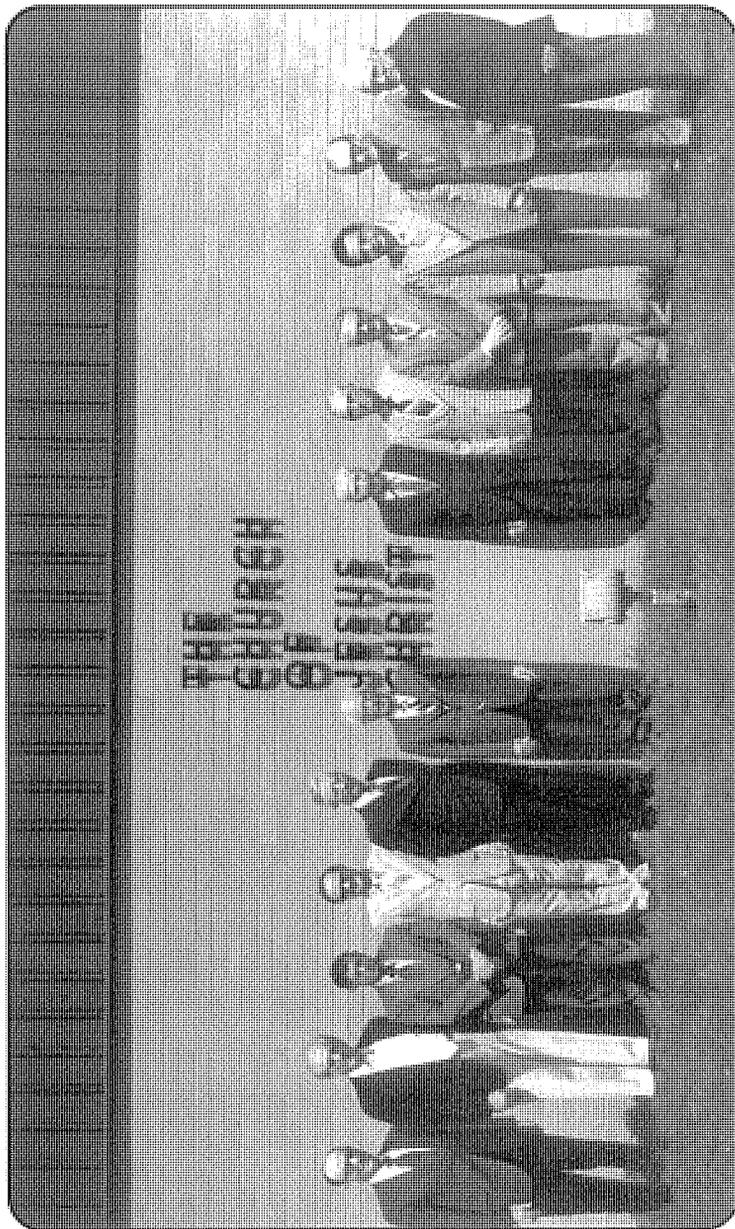
Brother Frank Calabrese, 1964-1986

Personal Data *birth: 9/30/21; baptism: 10/13/46; death: 1986*

Ordinations *elder: 10/16/55; evangelist: 4/19/59; apostle: 4/19/64*

Brother Frank Calabrese married Rosamond Brackett, whom he met while serving in the Army Air Corps, in August 1944. They had two children, Frank and Sherry, and four grandchildren. While in the service, he was promoted to first lieutenant and received a decoration and citation for flying fifty missions over the Brenner Pass. Brother Patsy Fyre baptized him into the Church on October 13, 1946.

He was ordained an elder in October 1955, an evangelist in April 1959, and an apostle on April 19, 1964. Brother Frank was very active in the Lorain, Ohio Branch, serving on numerous occasions there as pre-



Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 1975: (left to right): Angelo A. Corrado, V. James Lovaglio, Frank Calabrese, Dominic Thomas, Russell Cadman, Rocco Biscotti, Samuel Kirschner, Joseph Bittinger, Gorie Ciaravino, Paul D'Amico, Nicholas Pietrangelo, Joseph Lovaglio

siding elder and as a teacher in both Sunday School and MBA. He was the secretary of the Quorum of Twelve for several years. He also traveled extensively throughout the United States and Mexico in an effort to support the work among the Seed of Joseph.

Brother Frank worked in many instances under great stress, never complaining about his own physical ailments. One could not help but admire the many times he attended Quorum meetings, as well as other meetings, and after a full day's session, he would hasten to his room to telephone his wife Romy, who was at home fighting a sickness, a battle she valiantly fought for many years. He endeavored to balance his responsibilities to God and family, with a full commitment to both, until the day he passed away in 1986.

Brother Nicholas Pietrangelo, 1974-1996

Personal Data	<i>birth: 4/23/15; baptism: 10/13/35; death: 9/12/96</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 8/14/46; evangelist: 7/15/48; apostle: 5/5/74</i>
Leadership	<i>GMBA Vice President: 1946-48; GC Executive Secretary: 1960-74; Michigan-Ontario District President; GC First Counselor: 1979-92</i>
Mission Work	<i>Sarnia, Muncey, and Mt. Brydges, Ontario, Canada; Port Huron, Michigan</i>

Brother Nicholas Pietrangelo was born on April 23, 1915, the son of Brother Anthony and Sister Rose Pietrangelo. He first met The Church of Jesus Christ as a young boy in Detroit, Michigan when his parents were baptized in 1923. He grew up under the ministry of many of the Church's pioneers of his day and witnessed many manifestations of the Spirit and Power of God. Many of these brothers had sacrificed personal priorities, some relocating far from home, in order to minister the Restored Gospel to a few Italian immigrants in Detroit. By the time Brother Nick was baptized into the Church on October 13, 1935, Detroit Branch #1 was in a tremendous growth mode. The sacrifices he had seen others make in order to prosper the Church were very influential upon him throughout his life.

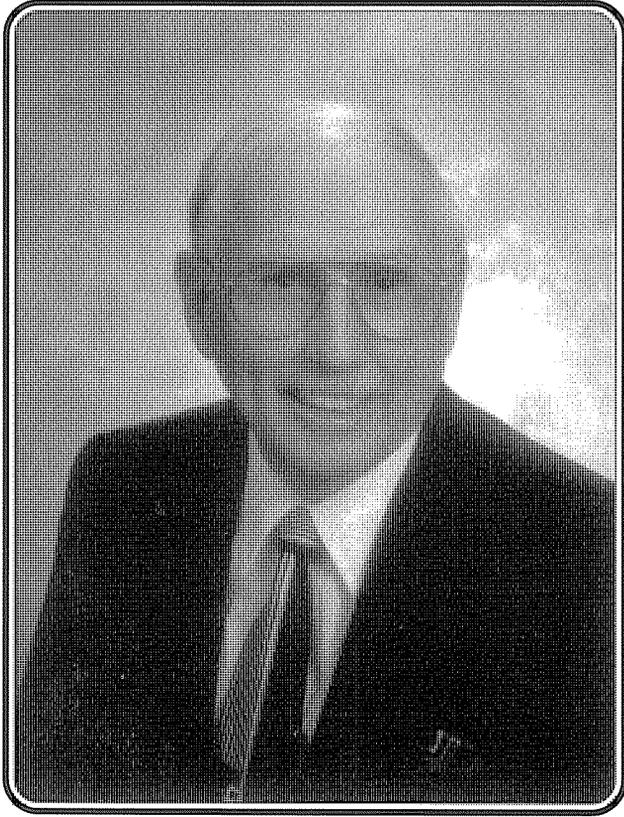
Although Brother Nick was a family man and a good provider, Sister Yolanda (Marinetti), his wife, and the four children they eventually had, became accustomed to his sense of duty when it came to Church matters. During the 1930s and 40s he was very active in supporting the Church's work in every way. He was ordained an elder on August 14, 1946 and an evangelist on July 15, 1948. Brother Nick was also active in supporting the works in Muncey, Mt. Brydges, Port Huron, and Sarnia.

Brother Nick's impact on the growth and development of Detroit Branch #1 cannot be overstated. He served as presiding elder there for 15 years and was a model of diligence and dedication to the Church, something he, himself, had learned from his predecessors.

Trusted Advisor, Faithful Administrator, Defender of the Faith

Over time, he would be called upon to serve at other levels of the Church, as evidenced by the many offices he held and committees he served on. He was never one to shy away from tough problems, facing difficult challenges head-on. He was known for holding others accountable for the fulfillment of their responsibilities—a man gifted with persistence in the completion of a task. Elected to the office of Executive Secretary of the General Church in April 1960, his recall of Church proceedings covering many decades became a trademark.

He was ordained an apostle in 1974 and served as First Counselor of the General Church from April 1979 until October 1992. He was a mentor and trusted advisor to many, including the President of the Church in his role as counselor. His attention to detail and order made him an effective administrator of the affairs of the Church. Noted for keeping principle above popularity, he was a staunch defender of, and advocate for, The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Nick passed away on September 12, 1996.



Robert A. Watson

Brother Robert A. Watson, 1979-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 9/5/22; baptism: 2/12/39</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 1/22/44; evangelist: 7/14/46; apostle: 4/22/79</i>
Leadership	<i>District President: California: 1971-75 & Southwest: 1975-79; Quorum of Seventy Vice President; American Indian Committee Chairman; GC Second Counselor: 1992-98; GC Historian</i>
Mission Work	<i>Muncy and Six Nations Indian Reserve; San Fernando Valley and Yucaipa, California; The Navajo Nation</i>
Publications	<i>author: "The Church's Divine Commission"; co-author: "Fasting and Prayer" booklet</i>

Brother Robert A. Watson (Bob) was born on September 5, 1922 in Wigan, England, the only child of Brother Robert M. and Sister Nancy Watson.

Reflecting on his life, Brother Bob writes:

My father left England in 1929 for Windsor, Canada, in search of employment. My mother and I followed him one year later. During the early part of the 1930s we came in contact with a few families who were destined to play a great part in our lives, the Burgesses, the Fords, and the Hendersons.

Native American Work Leads to Conversion

Brother Frank Ford, who at that time was an immigration officer, became very curious about a car that frequently came across the border carrying men of different nationalities. He discovered that they represented The Church of Jesus Christ and were traveling to the Indian Reservation at Muncey, Ontario. They invited him to go with them on one of their trips, and one Sunday he took them up on it, taking Clifford Burgess with him. When they returned home they were so excited at what they had seen and heard that they couldn't wait to tell my mother and father.

This first trip to Muncey was my family's introduction to the Church. My parents, along with the other families mentioned, wanting to know more about the Church and the brothers and sisters from Detroit, started to hold meetings at the various homes in Windsor, Canada.

At this time I was in my early teens and wasn't very much interested in religion. I attended church at the insistence of my parents. It wasn't, however, until a friend of mine, Doug Henderson, came back from a trip to Northern Canada, telling me of a testimony he had heard, that I started to become interested in the church. [It just so happened that this testimony was given by Sister Sarah Randazzo who, shortly thereafter, became Mrs. Sarah Watson, Bob's wife.] I then started to pay more attention to the meetings; and in the month of February 1938, while Brother Joe Lovalvo was preaching on the 2000 young stripling warriors, I decided to make my covenant with the Lord. Brother Doug and I then went down to the Detroit River where they broke the ice to baptize us.

Shortly after my baptism I was called to be a deacon at 17, then a teacher. Before my baptism I was very active in sports, and I always wanted to play in the game. After my baptism, I carried this same enthusiasm for the work of the Lord. I didn't want to sit on the sidelines of God's work, but rather I wanted to become actively involved.

Accepted the Call to Serve at a Young Age

In 1942, Brother Bob married Sister Sarah Randazzo in Detroit, Michigan and they were given three children: Elaine, Judy, and Larry. At the early age of 21, he was ordained an elder, taking upon himself the rigorous demands of the ministry, both at the Windsor Branch and the Six Nations Mission, which was under Windsor's jurisdiction at that time.

“One of Twelve Pillars”

It became apparent to Brother Bob, when he was still a young man, that the Lord would have a great work for him. In 1945, he was ordained an evangelist at the age of 23. While conferring with his wife about this increased responsibility, his mother-in-law, whom Sarah was taking care of at the time because she was very ill with cancer, overheard the conversation. She then proceeded to relate a vision she had previously received, in which she saw Brother Bob standing by one of 12 pillars preaching by the power of God.

Brother Bob continues:

We kept this experience to ourselves, not wishing to say anything until, if it were from God, it would be fulfilled. Approximately 33 years later the Lord gave me the following dream: I observed that the apostles were meeting in a room for the purpose of selecting the next apostle. Brother Dominic Thomas told them to write their selection on a piece of paper and then deposit their selection into a container. He then requested Brother Russell Cadman to reach into the container and select the name of the next apostle. Brother Russell reached in and pulled out the name of Robert A. Watson. He then appeared to take the paper and burn it as a sacrifice, that what they had done was sealed in heaven.

In January of 1979, approximately three months after I received this experience, the apostles met in Phoenix, Arizona. During their meetings the power of God was manifested, and they called me before their quorum. They told me concerning the experiences they had received relative to calling me into the office of an apostle. I was very much overcome by the Spirit, especially when I was informed of how God's power moved upon Brother Russell Cadman to make the motion for my calling. This confirmed my dream. I feel very humble in this calling.

A Compassion for Souls

Brother Bob moved his family to California in 1953 and eventually went on to become the Presiding Elder of the San Fernando Valley Branch for many years, as well as the President of the California District. In 1963 he made some exploratory trips to San Bernardino County, east of Los Angeles, responding to inquiries that had been made about the Church. With a reservation located nearby, he was also hopeful that perhaps a work might begin among the American Indians of that locale. Although discouraged by the lack of response on the reservation, he continued to make the 180-mile round trip on a regular basis. Eventually his efforts did bring forth fruit, which led to the establishment of a mission in Yucaipa, California, which today is a branch of the Church. Many of the people who were baptized there were elderly and had never had any association with the Church previously.

Inspired by their parents' love for and commitment to the Native Americans, and having captured their vision of Zion, all three of the Watson children, along with their families, moved to the Navajo Reservation between 1973 and 1974. Most of their family is still there laboring amongst the Seed of Joseph as of this writing. In September of 1977, Brother Bob and Sister Sarah sold their home and a prosperous business and also moved to the Navajo Reservation, after a brief stay in the Phoenix area, joining their children and others who had already moved there. They opened up an office supply store in Window Rock, the capital of the Navajo Nation, and remained in that area until they moved back to Phoenix in 1995.

A Passion for the Native American Work

It is worth noting that the calling of Brother Bob into the office of an apostle came while he was living and working among the Navajos. His devotion to the work among the Native American became one of the driving passions in his life. Returning home late from a General Church Conference one year, he felt the Lord speaking to his heart, calling upon him to put into writing the Covenants of God to the House of

Israel that are yet to be fulfilled in this dispensation, commencing with the Tribe of Joseph. This eventually led to the publication of the pamphlet entitled “*The Church’s Divine Commission*.” This same dedication led to his being asked to chair the American Indian Committee for a period of years.

After his retirement, he was called upon to take on some additional responsibilities, including: Secretary of the Quorum of Twelve, General Church Historian, and Second Counselor of the General Church.

“Yet Have Ye Not Many Fathers”

A man who has been a mentor and friend to many over the years, his ministry, as well as his leadership style, may best be described by the words of Paul found in I Corinthians 4:15:

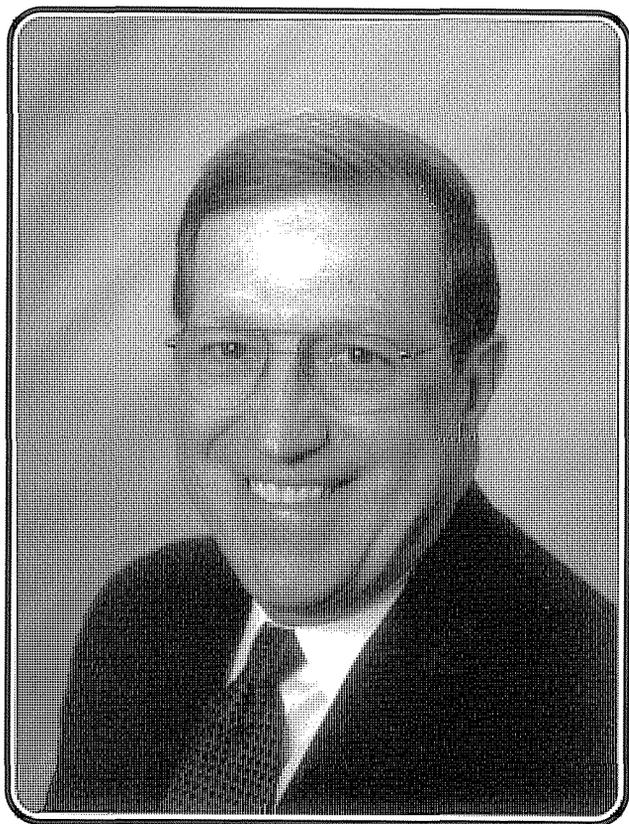
For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.

Brother Paul Palmieri, 1986-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 4/9/33; baptism: 8/19/56</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 4/16/67; evangelist: 10/27/74; apostle: 10/12/86</i>
Leadership	<i>GMBA President: 1974-77; GC Executive Secretary: 1979-86; GC First Counselor: 1992-present</i>
Mission Work	<i>Nigeria, Africa; India; Mexico; Italy; England, Poland, Guatemala, Philippines</i>
Publications	<i>Editor—“The Gospel News”: 1970-79</i>

Brother Paul was born to Anthony and Cannela Palmieri in West Aliquippa, Pennsylvania on April 9, 1933, the third of four children. His father left Italy for the United States in 1920; and his mother did not arrive in this country until eight years later. They were married in 1929. His father, who was introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ by Brother Dominic Jackman, was baptized in 1923 and his mother in 1931, both remaining faithful all their lives. Brother Anthony was ordained an elder in 1934.

Reflecting on his parents, Brother Paul comments:



Paul Palmieri

I am thankful for my parents who taught me to love God and people, to be good to my fellow man and to enjoy life, regardless of the circumstances. We were not the richest people in our town but we had a happy family and always had enough. My father worked hard to provide for us.

The year 1952 brought with it some very significant events in Paul's life. First of all, in January of that year, he graduated from high school, and shortly thereafter entered the job market. After a brief stint with a local steel company, he was employed for 11 years as an electrician with the Aliquippa and Southern Railroad. However, what was to prove to be a far more important development is best described by Brother Paul, himself:

At the end of 1952, while attending a Christmas Program practice, I asked one of the young girls, Ruth Eleanor DeLuca, to go out on a date. This was the beginning of our lives together. Ruth Eleanor and I were married on June 23, 1956 by Elder Thomas Ross of the Aliquippa Branch.

In April 1953, he was drafted into the United States Army where he served for two years. After his discharge, he qualified for 36 months of schooling under the GI Bill. He enrolled in Geneva College in 1956, at the same time maintaining his employment with the railroad. It took him seven years to earn his Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering because of conflicts with his work schedule. He credits the Lord with helping him through these very challenging years—it also took much perseverance on his part. Shortly after graduating, he was employed by Westinghouse Electric Corporation as an Industrial Engineer.

Rebirth

In Brother Paul's own words:

With all the wonderful things that have transpired in my life with Christ, the greatest blessing I received was the day Jesus Christ called me into His Gospel. After starting school in 1956, I became interested in the Church. Then one beautiful day on August 19, 1956, I felt the Spirit of God calling me to serve him. I was baptized by Brother John Ross and confirmed by my dad.. My wife followed, as she was baptized the Monday after a GMBA Conference on November 12, 1956. (She was ordained a Deaconess on February 28, 1988). This changed our lives and we would never be the same again. Our lives became very involved in the Church.

Second Draft

It wasn't long before he would be drafted once again, but this time into a very different kind of service. Brother Paul explains in his own words:

In 1967, I was offered a supervising position with Westinghouse, but it required me to work the afternoon shift. At this time in my life, I felt

that God was calling me into the priesthood so I refused the position with Westinghouse and remained as an engineer. The position of Supervision was for the afternoon shift and I felt it would conflict with my responsibilities in the Aliquippa Branch. I remember traveling home in my car and hearing the voice of the Lord speaking to me that, when I would arrive home, the phone would ring and it would be Brother John Ross who would speak to me about being called into the ministry. When I arrived home, the phone rang and it happened exactly as the voice said it would. I was ordained an elder in The Church of Jesus Christ on April 16, 1967.

It is significant to note that shortly after he was ordained, he did, in fact, receive another offer to be promoted to a supervisory position; however this time it did not conflict with his responsibilities with the Church, and so he accepted it. Brother Paul continues:

On October 27, 1974 I was ordained an evangelist in The Church of Jesus Christ. My ministry was blessed as I have seen the sick healed, and in one occasion where an individual had fallen and appeared dead, he was anointed and was brought back to life. I praise God for His goodness.

The Call to Service

According to Brother Paul:

One of my greatest challenges in The Church was when I was asked to be the Editor of the Gospel News. This was something I never thought I could do. But with the help of the Lord, I was the Editor for nine years from October 1970 to April 1979.

The Call to Labor

In 1979 he answered the call of the “Lord of the Harvest” to labor in foreign fields. His first trip was to the Netherlands with Brothers Paul Carr and Mike Hildenbrand. Brother Paul recalls that:

The Lord increased my desire to travel throughout the Church, and in 1980 I visited the Church in Nigeria with Brothers Dominic Thomas, Paul Carr and Mike Hildenbrand. In 1985, I made my first of

five trips to India. Four of my trips were with Brother Joseph Calabrese. Each trip was unique and each brought a blessing to our people in India and to those of us who traveled there.

In 1995 we received an inquiry about the Church from Mr. Edward Spyra in Poland. Brothers Phil Jackson, John DiBattista, and I made our initial visit there in 1995. A year later, we returned to start the work in Poland when I baptized Edward Spyra.

The Call to Lead

Brother Paul has answered the call again and again to provide leadership at many different levels within the Church. He was elected vice-president of the GMBA in 1968 and president in 1974. He resigned this position in 1977 because he was asked to serve as the Executive Secretary of the General Church. In 1979 he was elected to that office.

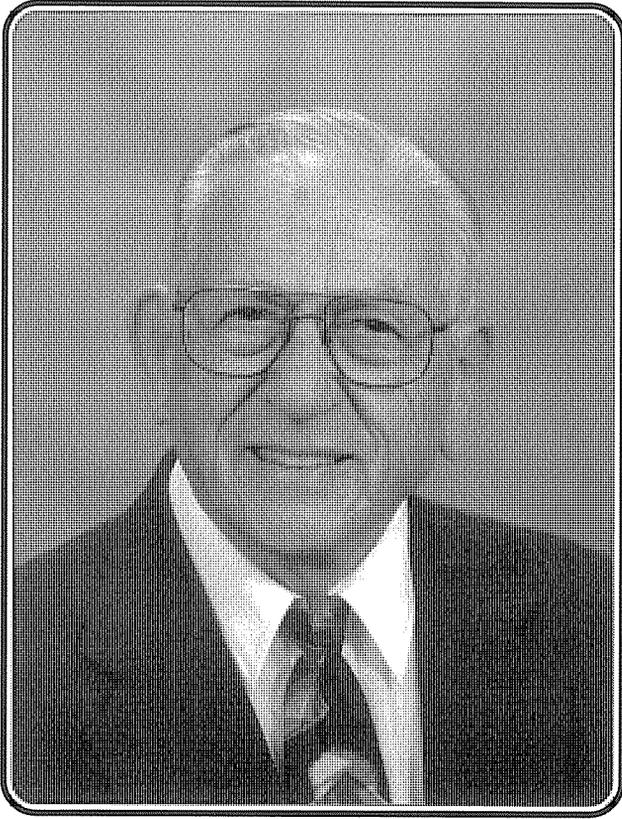
The call to lead, however, did not end there—in 1986 our brother was recommended to be ordained an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. On October 12, 1986 he was ordained at the General Church World Conference Center. In 1992, at the October Conference, he was elected First Counselor of the General Church.

Brother Paul's family has been a very important part of his life. He and his wife have one son, Paul Aaron.

Brother Joseph Calabrese, 1989-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 1/10/18; baptism: 2/18/45</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 10/16/55; evangelist: 5/4/58; apostle: 4/23/89</i>
Leadership	<i>GMBA Vice President: 1950-55, 1957-60; Ohio District President; Quorum of Seventy Vice President; Foreign Missions Chairman; India Coordinator; GC Correspondent</i>
Mission Work	<i>India, Italy, and Kenya</i>
Publications	<i>author: "Divine Continuity"; "Questions and Answers;" autobiography—"Missionary Endeavors at Home and Abroad"</i>

Joseph Calabrese was only four years old when his parents, Brother Antonio and Sister Theresa Calabrese, were baptized into the Church. They were charter members of the Lorain, Ohio Branch. His father



Joseph Calabrese

asked for his baptism at a conference in Youngstown, Ohio and his mother was the first to request baptism in Lorain.

Young Joseph attended the Lorain Branch regularly as a young person, but became inactive in his teenage years. He married Victoria Thomas, sister of current president of the Church, Dominic Thomas, on April 6, 1937, and she was baptized in July of 1944. Their marriage has been blessed with five children: Bonnie, Dennis, Cheryl, Candace, and Joel.

Brother Joe asked for his baptism while in a hospital. In his own words:

I knew as a young person attending church that someday I wanted to be baptized; however, I wanted to do it at my convenience, and defi-

nately before I would die. During World War II, I had a brother in the service in South Dakota who wanted me to be his best man at his wedding. I did make the trip, along with his fiancée, and was present at their marriage. Upon returning home to Lorain by train, I became very sick. When I arrived home, I was put into a hospital with acute appendicitis. It was then that I began to fear death; so, for the first time, I requested that my wife call an elder to anoint me. Soon Brother Alfred Dominico came into my room. I said to him, “make it good.” He smiled and said it was up to God. While he was praying, my whole life came before me as a motion picture. What I saw was not good. I was sure I could not go to heaven on my past. As I was seeing this, the spirit of repentance fell upon me when his prayer (which seemed to take forever) was concluded. The first thing I said was, “I want to be baptized.” The surgery was successful and 33 days later I was baptized on February 18, 1945.

A Man of Action

It didn't take Brother Joe long before he became very active in church activities, which initially focused on the young people. This eventually led to his election as vice president of the GMBA. Over the years he has been exemplary in his commitment to the Church and the Lord, involving himself at every level. He was ordained an elder on October 16, 1955, and an evangelist on May 4, 1958.

He has fulfilled many other responsibilities in the Church over the years—too many to record in this brief writing (some of which are listed above). As President of the General Church Board of Trustees, he helped coordinate the building of the World Conference Center in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. In addition to the above, he was responsible for establishing the office of General Church Correspondent, which he held for 15 years, and was also responsible for the printing of William Bickerton's Testimony.

A New Pair of Shoes

Brother Joe has been blessed with many experiences over the years. In one dream, a man of God gave him a new pair of shoes, as well as his own shoes, which were battered and worn. He promised him he would try to do what he could with these shoes to spread love, kindness and goodness

to all people. This prepared him for the calling he was to receive into the Quorum of Twelve at the April Conference of 1989. He, along with Brother Paul Benyola, was called before the apostles. While questioning them, the power of God came upon them so strongly that no one could utter a word. With this as a confirmation, the apostles voted unanimously to recommend them to the priesthood for ordination.

On April 23, at the World Conference Center, our brothers were set apart to be ordained. Brother Paul Palmieri washed Brother Joe's feet and Brother Dominic Thomas ordained him into the Quorum of Twelve. As Brother V. James Lovalvo was shaking Brother Joe's hand, he spoke the Word of the Lord pronouncing God's blessing upon him.

Trial By Fire

Brother Joe's faith has been severely tested over the years. One of those tests came by way of affliction, as Brother Joe recalls:

About the year of 1965, I began to have eye problems. With my eyesight gradually diminishing, it became necessary for me to change my lens more often than normal. I was in my 47th year, an age where vision normally begins to change, but my vision changes were too often. Finally, the optometrist said I should go to the Cleveland Clinic and have an ophthalmologist check me, which I did. The result was, "You are going blind." This shocked me terribly, but I trusted in God. The doctor said I had inward cataracts, which were very unusual at my age, and surgery could help but no promises for improvement. I refused to have surgery. I trusted in God and was anointed many times, but nothing changed. In fact, Brother Paul D'Amico came from Lockport, New York to anoint me, feeling that God directed him to come. He anointed me and God blessed him with a powerful prayer; but again, no immediate results. A young brother who was with him, Sal Azzinaro Jr., had a vision while Brother Paul prayed of a crown on my head with seven stars. While there was no clear interpretation, Brother Paul said that seven was a perfect number in scripture and that he felt in due time God would take care of me. Shortly afterwards, Sister Carmela D'Amico had a vision in which she saw me in the hospital, and then she saw Christ come in and perform the surgery on my eyes. Hearing this, I consented to the operation.

Early in 1967, I had surgery on my right eye. In those days they would put sandbags on each side of the head to prevent you from moving it. During the first day of recovery, I spoke to a patient who was in the same room with me about the Church, even though I could not move my head. In the evening, I was experiencing intense pain. When the doctor examined me, he found that my eye was hemorrhaging about 75% and feared I would lose it. In the morning, my wife came to see me, and I told her I needed an elder. Brother Dominic Thomas happened to come with her so he immediately anointed me and the hemorrhaging stopped, as did the pain. Praise God!

A couple of days later, I had preached the Gospel again to one of the patients in my room. That night, I began to have nightmares (no doubt the devil was angry with me for preaching the Gospel.) In one of the nightmares, I tore my bandages off and started to gouge my eyes with my knuckles. I screamed and cried. I thought surely I had done severe damage. Once again after being examined, the doctor said all was well. I was released after 10 days. The male nurse who was assigned to me said in 20 years he had never witnessed such a miraculous healing. I gave him my testimony as well.

One year later, I underwent surgery on my left eye. Once again the Lord came to my rescue. After surgery, I had hiccups that I could not stop. This was dangerous because it could break the stitches in my eye and cause hemorrhaging. Precisely at that time, Brother Rocco Biscotti came and anointed me and the hiccupping stopped.

For years, I wore very thick glasses. The work in India had already started. While I was able to be mobile and get around, I prayed I could do better. I had heard that progress was being made in the ophthalmology field by inserting implant lenses. The Lord led me to another ophthalmologist as the Cleveland Clinic refused to help me because of my bad history with the first surgeries. In 1985, I had implants put in both eyes, which were very successful. The doctor still to this day tells his nurses what a miracle I am. Since then, my vision has been 15/20 consistently. Praise God!

Years later, he would be tested again and, once again the source of the problem was his eyes, as Brother Joe explains:

In the year 1973, while in Church, I had a nosebleed that would not stop. I was taken to the hospital emergency room, but the doctor could not help even though he gave me medicine to stop it. I had an aneurysm over my left eye, which they could not reach even to cauterize it. While

I was being cared for in my room by a doctor and nurse, another person, who I thought then was another doctor, came directly to me, passing the other two people. He began to speak to me, saying, "I understand you are a minister." My first thought was, "Don't worry who I am, just help me." I was polite and nodded my head yes. Again, he said, "If you are a minister, then you should know what is written in Romans 8:28." Again, I wondered, "Why all the questions, just help me." But again I was polite and shrugged my shoulder, "No, I do not know." He persisted. He said, "It says all things will work together for good for those who love and serve God," and then told me not to worry. He then left the room the way he came in. Later, I was given to understand that he was a messenger of God.

I complained to God. Why? Why is all this happening to me? Suddenly, I either passed out from the medicine or fell asleep. The next thing I remember was that I was having an experience. I saw Jesus come into my room. He entered through the ceiling. Without saying anything, he took me by my hand and we went through the ceiling into the sky, leaving my body in the bed. We traveled, his hand in mine, side by side in the sky—like going through time. I could see the stars and galaxies. Finally, after a period of time, we landed on the ground, and I noticed it was at the beginning of time. I knew I was witnessing Cain killing Abel. Jesus spoke to me and said, "Did you see that?" I, of course, said, "Yes." I then received the answer to my question, "Why was all this affliction happening to me?" Jesus said, "The same spirit that did this is trying to do the same thing to you, and not only to you, but, from the beginning of time, to prophets, apostles, and all men of God." He further said, "I want to tell you more. Be careful of what people say are innocent games such as the Ouiga board, witchcraft, sorcery, and astrology." I then saw Joseph Smith shot to death. Jesus then put His hand on my shoulder and told me not to worry; He would be with me. I then awoke back in my bed in the hospital.

I realized I had received a most amazing "out of body" experience. I was also told that I didn't wake up until three days later and during that time several different elders had come to anoint me. I praise God for the great love He has bestowed upon my family and me.

More of his personal experiences can be read in the publication, *Missionary Work at Home and Abroad*. Undoubtedly, Brother Joe has been one of the most active missionaries this Church has had in recent years. In 1981, along with Brother Alvin Swanson, he organized the Church in

India. He has also gone on missionary work to many parts of the United States, as well as to several foreign countries. He continues to be an active participant in the missionary work of the Church and made his 10th trip to India in January of 2000. God has surely used him to touch thousands of people throughout the world with love, kindness, and goodness. He will long be remembered for his unwavering commitment to fulfill Christ's great commission to take the Gospel to all nations.

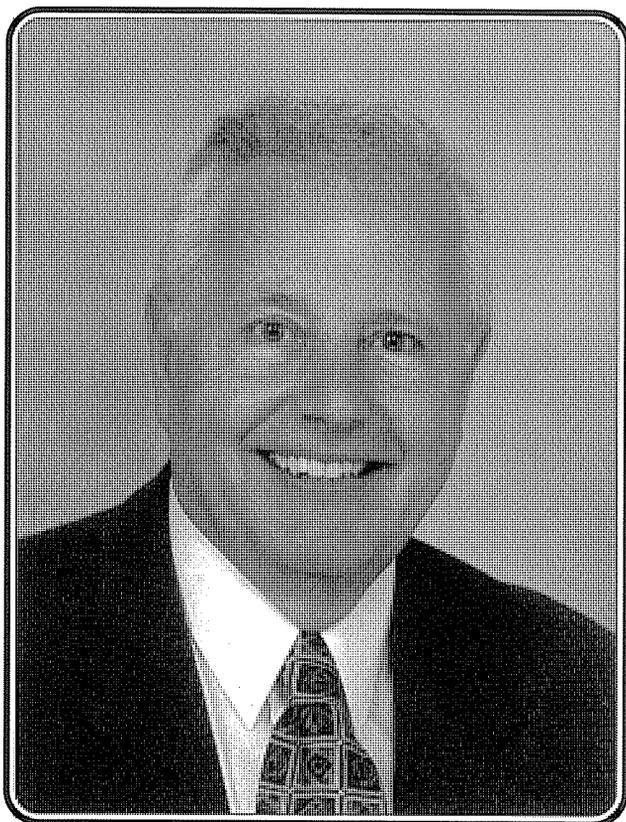
Brother Paul Benyola, 1989-Present

Personal Data	<i>birth: 12/11/37; baptism: 12/31/56</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 10/13/63; evangelist: 11/4/73; apostle: 4/23/89</i>
Leadership	<i>Atlantic Coast District President: 1980-84; Chairman of General Church Committees: Development Committee (1982-1986), National Education, Missionary Foundation; GC Quorum of Seventy Vice President & President: 1983-86 & 1986-89</i>
Mission Work	<i>Independence, Missouri; Dedham, Massachusetts</i>

Paul Benyola was born on December 11, 1937, in Hopelawn, New Jersey. Paul was the second child of Brother Joseph and Sister Margaret Benyola, an evangelist and a deaconess, respectively, in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Miraculous Recovery

At 12 years of age, Paul was a passenger in a vehicle that was involved in a head-on collision that took the life of a six-year-old boy in the other car. Paul, along with two cousins, was critically injured. When Paul's parents, Brother Joe and Sister Margaret, arrived home from a General Church conference in 1950 to hear the news of their son's grave condition, the doctor told them that it would only be a matter of a day or so before death came. Brother Joe anointed Paul and the other young men, and requested that the Church fast and pray for them. Five days passed and Paul still hadn't regained consciousness. The doctors hadn't even bothered to set his broken limbs, as they were certain he wouldn't survive the accident. Paul's parents stayed by his bedside and Sister Margaret had a



Paul Benyola

vision in which she saw all the prayers of the saints ascending to heaven as a bouquet of flowers. This vision was truly from God, as the prayers were answered in a miraculous way. Paul finally regained consciousness and the doctors went to work setting his broken limbs and wiring his jaw. He couldn't eat solid food for about eight weeks, but by December, only two months after the accident, Paul was out sledding with his friends, totally healed. God had performed a miracle!

Drafted into the Army—Both Spiritually and Naturally

From 1956 to 1958, Paul served in the United States Army. In November of 1956, he was in basic training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts when the New Jersey Local hosted the GMBA Conference. Paul

had looked forward to going home on leave and visiting with his friends and acquaintances in the Church, but because of a speck of dust on his shoes, he didn't pass inspection and was confined to the army base for the weekend. Sitting in the deserted bunkhouse that Sunday morning, Paul thought about the brothers and sisters meeting together in New Jersey. It was then that he remembered the Bible sitting in the bottom of his footlocker. He took it out, opened it, and began reading the New Testament. When he reached Matthew 3:10, which read, "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," something happened.

"When I read that verse," Brother Paul recalls, "I was converted immediately. I began to shed tears, which was the first and only time I have ever shed tears when reading scripture. I knew that I was going the wrong way, and I changed my life from that point on. I also became fearful and prayed to the Lord that He would spare my life until I could return home and be baptized. After all the opportunities to be baptized I had let pass me by, I now had to wait to be baptized."

Meanwhile, back in New Jersey, the Spirit of God was moving upon those gathered for the GMBA Conference, and there were many who called for their baptism that day. Paul had to wait about six weeks, but he finally entered the waters of baptism with his natural father on December 31, 1956. It was the coldest day of the year and ice formed on his hair as he came out of the water, but he didn't feel the cold at all.

Brother Paul was given an honorable discharge from the Army in September of 1958. He married Dottie (Scheffler) Benyola on February 25, 1961. They had three sons, Joseph, Scott, and Paul.

Service to the Church

Brother Paul was ordained an elder October 13, 1963, an evangelist on November 4, 1973 and an apostle on April 23, 1989. Over the years he has served as presiding elder of the Hopelawn, New Jersey; Lockport, New York; and Levittown, Pennsylvania Branches, and was instrumental in starting the mission in Dedham, MA as his natural work took him to these various areas.

Calling into the Ministry

While contemplating on his calling to the ministry he had the following dream: He along with several other young men of the church were working side by side with ministers of The Church of Jesus Christ. They were in the process of finishing large foundations that he was led to understand were the foundations of Zion. The foundations were deep and strong but they were only a few feet above the muddy ground that was the construction site. The site was as far as the eye could see. Brother Paul understood the experience to be an affirmation of his calling to the priesthood, and that he would, along with the other brothers in his experience, be involved with building the foundations of Zion. The other brothers in his experience would also be called into the ministry. Brother Paul was ordained an elder by his father, Brother Joseph Benyola, on October 13, 1963.

Brother Paul did not reveal his experience to the other young men who were building the foundations of Zion until they were called into the ministry. The last brother in his experience was ordained in 1992. This experience took 30 years to be fulfilled.

Laboring for Zion

Under Brother Paul's direction as chairman of the General Church Development Committee, a missionary outreach program was organized in Independence, Missouri. Many meetings were held there and hundreds of contacts were made by elders, evangelist, apostles, and members who donated their time, money, and labor to support this missionary outreach geared toward other Restoration groups. Brother Charles and Sister Ilene Smith still maintain the mission at Independence.

During his tenure as President of the Quorum of Seventy, a program was implemented in which two evangelists were sent to each region at least once per year to hold special evangelists' meetings. Also, various committees were formed within the Quorum to research countries throughout the world and to investigate cultures, religions, and the possibilities of establishing the Church in those lands. These efforts served as a catalyst, helping the Quorum to take a more active role in the world-

wide missionary efforts of the Church, which was later accomplished by placing the General Church Board of Missions under the authority of the Quorum of Seventy.

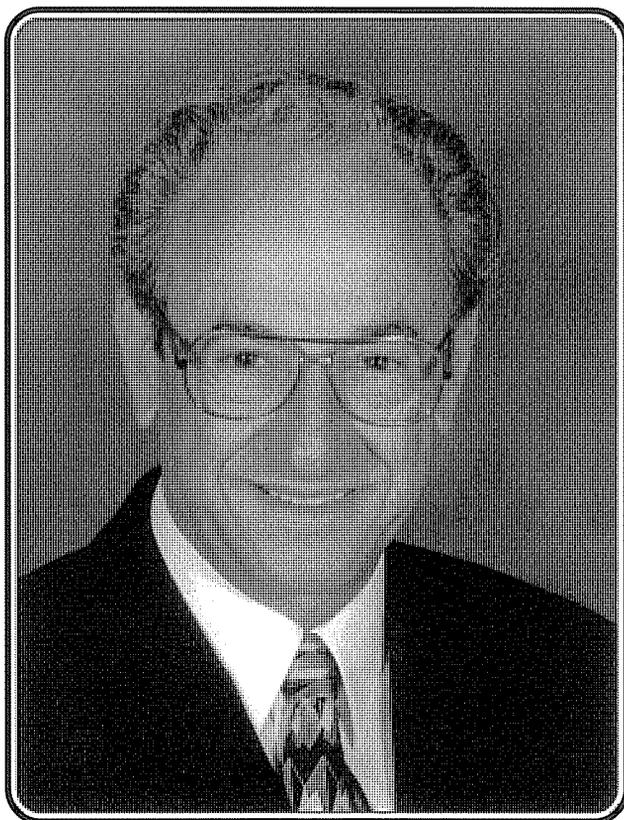
Brother Paul was elected Chairman of the newly established Missionary Foundation, which is now a major financial contributor to the spiritual and humanitarian needs of our missionary programs in various countries. He has also served as Chairman of the General Church Education Committee.

Calling as an Apostle

The passing away of Brothers Frank Calabrese and Rocco Biscotti had left two vacancies in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. When they gathered together at the April Conference in 1989, the Apostles were inspired to bring before them Brother Paul Benyola, as well as Brother Joseph Calabrese. While questioning them about this calling, the Power of God fell upon them so strongly that no one could utter a word. With this as a confirmation, the apostles voted unanimously to recommend their ordination as apostles to the General Church Priesthood for ratification. Brother Paul was ordained an apostle at the World Conference Center in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, on April 23, 1989. He currently serves the Quorum as its secretary.

Continued Missionary Efforts

In 1989, Brother Paul, along with Brothers Joseph Calabrese and Chuck Smith, held a three-day session with the apostles of the Temple Lot Church in Independence, Missouri. They discussed our faith and doctrine. They were in harmony on many points of doctrine, and agreed to meet at some future date to further discuss the areas where we differed in our beliefs.



Thomas M. Liberto

Brother Thomas M. Liberto, 1995-Present

Personal Data *birth: 5/19/34; baptism: 10/24/54*
 Ordinations *elder: 5/2/65; evangelist: 5/17/70; apostle: 10/15/95*
 Leadership *California District President: 1975-79 & 1992-96; Quorum of Seventy
 Vice President & President: 1994-97; GC Second Counselor: 1998-
 present*
 Mission Work *Mexico, Italy, Poland, Philippines*

Brother Thomas Mark Liberto was born on May 19, 1934, in Glassport, Pennsylvania. He was the first of three children born to Brother Nick and Sister Lena Liberto. His grandmother, Sister Bernadina Thomas, was the first member of his family to join The Church of Jesus Christ and was a spiritual role model to Brother Tom throughout his life.

Shortly after he was born, Apostle Charles Ashton visited the Liberto home and took baby Tom in his arms and prayed for him. After the prayer, he told Sister Lena that the Lord gave him to understand that Tom would one day be a leader in the Church. A short time later, he was taken to Church for the first time where Apostle Isaac Smith blessed him.

Parents were Charter Members of the San Diego Branch

In 1945, the family moved to San Diego, California, where they joined with a few other families to become charter members of the San Diego Branch of the Church. He attended church on a regular basis throughout his school years. One especially noteworthy development during these years was the fact that he happened to meet his future wife, Marcia Pettit, at his high school.

Enlistment in the Service of Both God and Country

Tom and Marcia became engaged in March 1953 and the following month he enlisted in the United States Air Force. He went through basic training at Parks Air Force Base, near San Francisco, California and lived in that area for 19 months. He and Sister Marcia were married in San Diego on January 30, 1954, and lived in Pleasanton, California until he was assigned to duty in Alaska. Before leaving for the frigid north, where he spent 13 months, he was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ on October 24, 1954 by Brother Felix Buccellato. He and his wife were blessed with four children: Debra, Lynn, Nancy, and Thomas.

Brother Tom has been a faithful servant to the Church from the time of his baptism until the present. He was ordained an elder in 1965, and an evangelist in 1970. He has served on the Pacific Coast District Mission Board for over 30 years, and most recently had responsibility for the Church in Mexico. He served the district as chairman of the evangelists, and second counselor, first counselor, and president for two terms, from 1975 to 1979 and from 1992 to 1996. Brother Tom served on various General Church Committees over the years, including the General Church Development Committee and the President's Planning Task Force. He was active in the evangelistic outreach at Independence, Missouri.

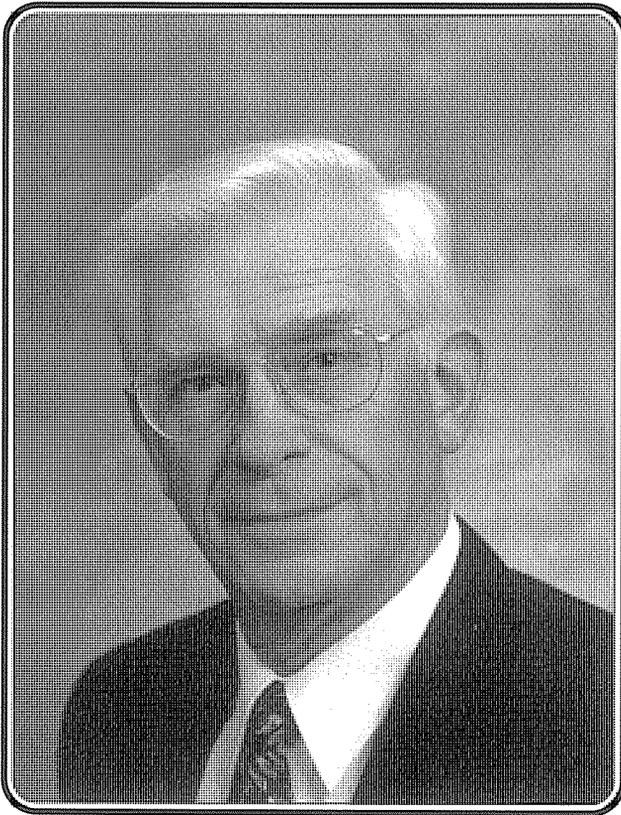
Brother Tom retired from his natural labors in 1990. During his 38 years of civil and military service, his responsibilities increased over the years, beginning as a carpenter and cabinetmaker and ending his career as director of transportation.

Although he retired from his natural work, his labors for the Church intensified. He served for five years as Vice-President of the General Church Quorum of Seventy Evangelists. He was instrumental in the reorganization of the General Church Mission Board and served as chairman for five years. He was elected President of the Quorum of Seventy in February 1994, an office he held until his calling as an apostle. He has visited branches and missions of the Church throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Italy, Poland, and the Philippines.

A Call to Serve in The Quorum of Twelve

Brother Tom was ordained an apostle at the General Church Conference on October 15, 1995. After the prayer, he was so overcome with the Spirit that he was unable to rise from his chair for quite some time.

There were a number of experiences received relative to his calling, one of which Brother Tom had himself. Two years prior to his calling, he was given a dream where he was summoned to meet with the Quorum of Twelve. His wife was walking with him, and, when they got to the room where they were meeting, she remained at the door while Brother Tom was ushered into the room and stood before the Twelve. He was then told that he was being called into the office of an apostle, upon which he awoke, shaken by how vivid the dream was. On the day of his calling, it happened exactly as in the dream. In addition, a few months prior to his ordination, a sister had a vision in which she saw a crown of twelve stars on Brother Tom's head as he sat on the rostrum during a church service. More recently, at the October General Church Conference of 1998, he was elected Second Counselor of the General Church.



Isaac D. Smith

Brother Isaac D. Smith, 1997-Present

- Personal Data *birth: 1933; baptism: 7/1/56*
 Ordinations *elder: 10/22/61; evangelist: 4/16/67; apostle: 10/12/97*
 Leadership *Southwest District President: 1987-92 & 1996-00; Quorum of Seventy President*
 Mission Work *White River Apache Tribe; England, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Dominica*

Isaac D. Smith was born in 1933 at Elizabeth, Pennsylvania to Brother Isaac and Sister Gertrude Dreer Smith. The family attended The Church of Jesus Christ at the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch where he was blessed as a child. Young Ike was spiritually nurtured at the Glassport Branch

where he attended all services. His father, along with other pillars of the Church such as Charles Ashton and James Curry, were great influences on him.

A Rich Heritage in the Church

Coming from a spiritually rich heritage, Brother Ike's family's association with the Church began in the early 1860s prior to the official incorporation. His mother, an ordained deaconess, had a grandfather, William Bacon, who was an apostle, as well as the first Secretary of the General Church. His father, Isaac Smith, Sr., was ordained an apostle in 1911, and his uncle, Fred Smith, was also an apostle during that era of the Church. The Smith home was continually filled with family, saints, friends, and neighbors, as they generously demonstrated the gift of hospitality to many.

A Call to Serve God While Serving His Country

At the age of 23, Ike was drafted into the United States Army. While stationed at Fort Ord, California, he had a strong desire to attend church and found Apostle Joseph Loyalvo holding house meetings in nearby Monterey. The Lord touched young Ike's heart that day, July 1, 1956, and he was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ.

After his discharge from the service, Brother Ike returned to Pennsylvania. He attended Church at his home branch of Glassport. He was involved with many Church activities. While attending a General Church Conference, he met Sister Bonnie Calabrese, daughter of Brother Joseph and Sister Vicki Calabrese of Lorain, Ohio. They were married in Lorain, Ohio on October 17, 1959 by her uncle, Brother Dominic Thomas and were blessed with five children: Isaac J., Brian, Thomas, Tamara and Brent.

They resided in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania and were members of the Glassport Branch. Brother Ike was ordained an elder October 22, 1961. They eventually moved and began to worship in Monongahela, Pennsylvania where he later served as presiding elder.

A Heart for the Youth of the Church

Involvement in the MBA became a focus for him. While he was President of the GMBA, the campout concept was implemented for the first time. The camp gatherings were so well received that since 1967 they have been held annually as week-long gatherings. A love for the young people has always inspired Brother Ike, and his leadership has been instrumental in leading many over the years to dedicate their life to Christ. The Church's campouts have provided a wonderful environment where this can and has taken place. This has been the realization of a dream for Brother Ike.

A Heart for the Seed of Joseph

Brother Alma Cadman ordained Brother Ike an evangelist on April 16, 1967. As he was ordained, he arose and spoke in the Gift of Tongues and has carried that gift until this day. He also became a member of the Board of Missions. A renewed zeal for missionary work was spreading throughout the Church at that time, and he and his wife were among those who had captured that spirit. A trip to Arizona to visit Brother Dan and Sister Dolores Picciuto in San Carlos only served to reinforce the conviction that was already there to personally become involved with the work among God's covenant people, the Seed of Joseph (the Native American). In early 1969 the desire to do this work evolved into a commitment as Brother Ike volunteered to go to the White Mountain Apache Reservation. He resigned his job, which he had held for 18 years, and in May of that year, the Smiths moved to Pinetop, Arizona, which borders the reservation. Since that time, others with similar direction have moved to the area to help with this work, and a branch of the Church has been established in that area.

Active in Leadership

Brother Ike served as President of the Southwest District and then, four years later, the Southwest Region. He has held other responsibilities such as Vice-President and President of the Quorum of Seventy Evan-

gelists. As President, he helped to promote evangelism throughout the Church, and played an important role in restructuring the Mission Board to help facilitate that process. He has traveled extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, England, Germany, Italy, Domenica, and Colombia to evangelize the Gospel. He was ordained an apostle at the October Conference of 1997.

He retired in October of 1996 after working for United Parcel Service for 20 years and since then has devoted even more of his time to the Church. He is a staunch supporter and defender of the faith, who is continuing to actively promote the Gospel message wherever he can.

Brother Peter Scolaro, 1997-Present

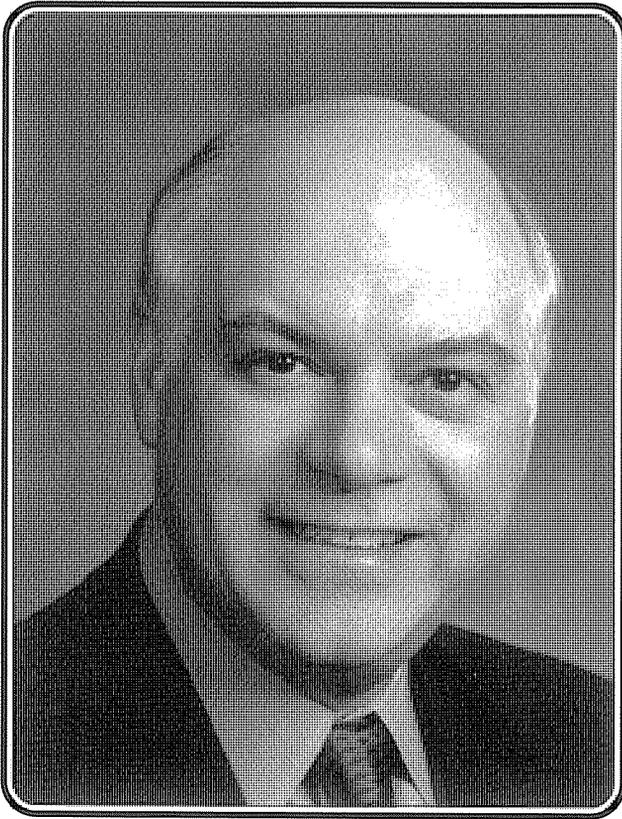
Personal Data	<i>birth: 5/7/47; baptism: 5/19/63</i>
Ordinations	<i>elder: 5/27/79; evangelist: 11/5/89; apostle: 10/12/97</i>
Leadership	<i>Michigan/Ontario District President; Americas Missionary Operating Committee (AMOC) Chairman; MOC Vice Chairman</i>

From early in his youth, it was obvious that Brother Peter's life would be in The Church of Jesus Christ. In a spirit-filled Sunday morning service at the GMBA Conference in Youngstown, Ohio on May 19, 1963, he was among the first to ask for his baptism. A total of 13 young people obeyed the Gospel that day where the blessings of God were so profound that they are still remembered by the many who were there. Sober and intensely serious about serving The Lord even at this young age, he could be pictured as being a pillar later in life. His meticulousness in analyzing matters, particularly as they pertain to the scriptures and The Church of Jesus Christ, is well-known.

Mentored by Leaders in the Church

Brother Peter, reflecting on his youth in the Church, had this to say:

Perhaps because I understood that whosoever will may come, I just took for granted the opportunity to come into and grow in the Church. From the time I was a small boy, I have always been excited about the



Peter Scolaro

workings of the Church. I grew up close to Brothers whose lives were dedicated to serving the Lord and His Church. I loved to go places with my father, an elder in the Church, and often had the opportunity to sit quietly while Brothers discussed challenges, successes, and opportunities as the Church encountered them. These discussions made indelible impressions on me. As I grew up, contemplating the success of the Lord's Church became integral with my thought processes. I thought it only reasonable to grow spiritually and naturally within the context of the Church over time. . . .

Some experiences of his calling into the Quorum of Twelve have been directive and uplifting to him. Late Apostle Gorie Ciaravino received a dream shortly after Brother Peter was ordained into the Ministry in which he saw the Church on a long journey, by way of what appeared

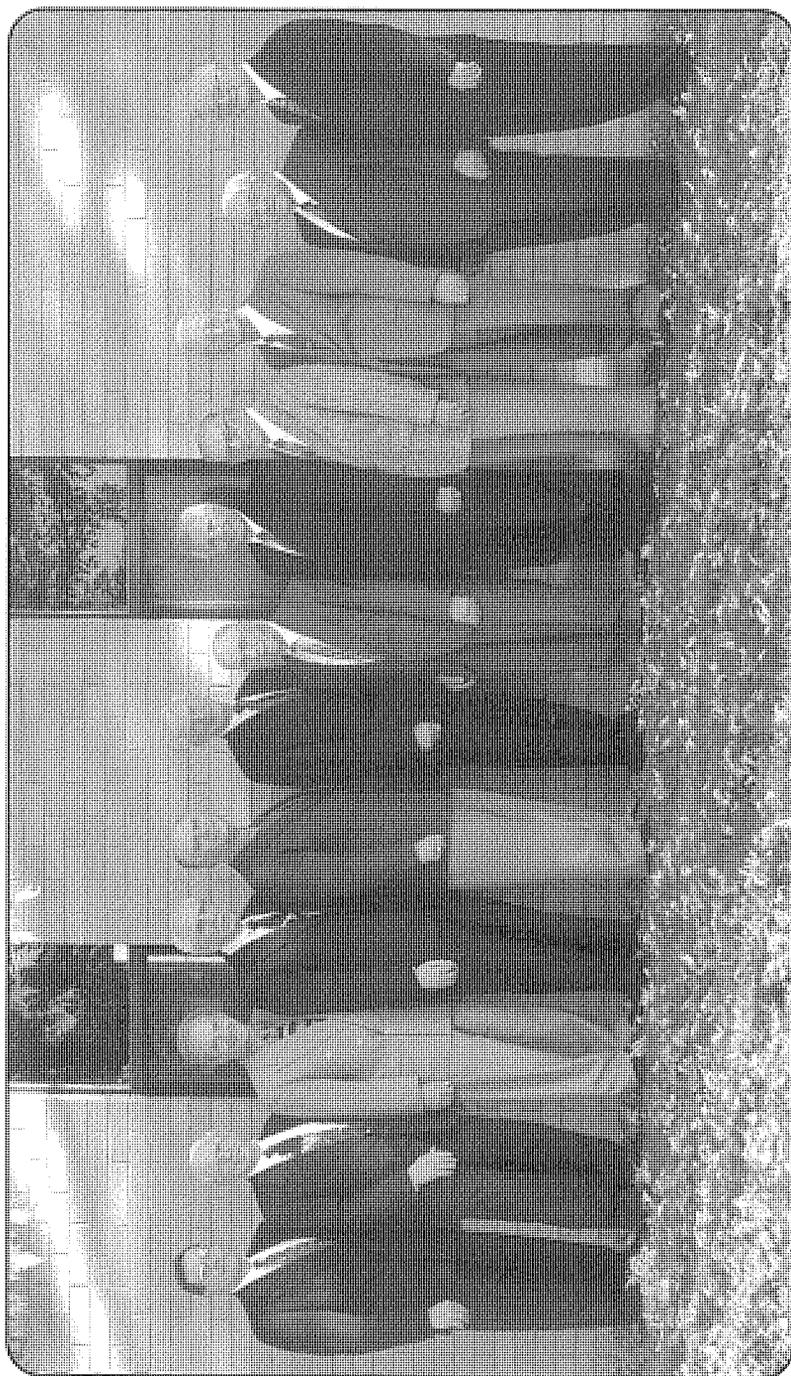
to be a convoy, and Brother Peter was a leader along the way. In another dream Apostle Nicholas Pietrangelo was sitting next to him at a table as they handled an important, sensitive matter. He, himself, received other experiences prior to his calling, which further prepared him for the office, such as a dream he had in which Brother Gorie pointed to General Church Minutes that were in his hand and said, "See right here: Brother Peter Scolaro has been called and ordained an apostle."

Laboring in his Detroit, Michigan Branch #I, the Michigan-Ontario District (now Great Lakes Region), the General Church, and the MBA, he has been able to put the talents the Lord has given him to great use. More recently, he served as the Chairman of the Americas Missionary Operating Committee (AMOC) and Vice Chairman of the Missionary Operating Committee (MOC) under the Quorum of Seventy Evangelists, which has oversight of all the missionary work in the Church. He also helped to provide the valuable leadership during the difficult transition period from the previous General Mission Board to the newly restructured MOC.

Brother Peter is a graduate of Wayne State University. He also served in the United States Army from 1970-1972 in Berlin, Germany. He and his wife, Sister Marilyn, have two children, Brother Chris and Sister Julie (Gibson).

After being ordained an apostle at the General Church Conference on October 12, 1997, along with Brother Isaac D. Smith, Brother Scolaro stated that he knew the responsibilities he was undertaking challenged his humanity and frailty in comparison to the possibilities of the Lord's expectations and invited the prayers of the saints on his behalf in the performance of his duties.

(A special thank you to Brother Jason Monaghan for his assistance in obtaining many of the photographs used in this chapter.)



Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 1997: (left to right): Paul Palmieri, Robert A. Watson, Thomas M. Liberto, V. James Lovaivo, Peter Scolaro, Isaac Smith, Joseph Bittinger, Paul Benyola, Joseph Calabrese, Russell Cadman, Joseph Lovaivo, Dominic Thomas

10

*Restructuring
of the
Administration
of
The Church of
Jesus Christ*

CHAPTER TEN

. . . [T]his thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. . . . Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth . . . and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing . . . then thou shalt be able to endure . . . Exodus 18:18, 21-23

DISTRICTING OF THE CHURCH

From its inception, The Church of Jesus Christ has been a federation of Missions and Branches responsible to the headquarters, which for most of the Church's existence has been located in Monongahela, Pennsylvania. When the Church was yet young, her primary concern was to preach the Gospel to any and all who would listen. Administrative matters were small, with few requiring immediate decisions. Many of the issues were usually resolved at the Conferences that were held quarterly. The records show that at many of the Conferences there was such an outpouring of the Spirit that seldom did the members leave with bitter feelings.

Brother William H. Cadman writes in *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ* of many miracles, healings, and visions that were commonplace in these Conferences. These gifts of God apparently did much to weld the Branches and Missions into a strong, unified Church. The Conferences were times for special feasting in the gifts of the Lord. Business was usually handled quickly, with much time devoted to the worship of God.

As the Church grew in both size and complexity, more time at conferences was being devoted to the business and organization of the Church. General Church Conference had become a forum for discussing relatively minor issues as well as the weightier ones. Many issues raised at the

local level had to wait until the next General Conference before being resolved, resulting in some decisions being made too late.

The need for better organization in the General Church became increasingly more apparent in some quarters of the Church. The need to eliminate the minor issues that were being brought to conference was also evident, with the Church needing more of her time to resolve the weightier matters. To some, the need was very apparent, while to others the thought of changing the administration of the Church in any way was unthinkable.

Probably one of the first to see the need to decentralize some of the administrative functions of the Church was Brother Rocco Biscotti of Cleveland, Ohio. At the General Conference of January 5, 1946, he suggested that the General Church reorganize into Districts. (*General Church Minutes*, January 5, 1946, p. 612) This suggestion apparently met with some opposition, as it was tabled. Yet the seed was planted, even though it would be another eight years before the idea finally came to fruition.

Because of its remoteness from the headquarters of the parent Church in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, the sense of urgency to implement some type of plan for establishing Districts in the Church was nowhere more apparent than in California. Since all the ministers there were in support of the concept, Brother V. James Loalvo began to correspond with Brother Cadman, president of the Church, who also promised his support. Recognition of the need for change began to grow throughout the Church and at the April 1954 General Church Conference a motion was passed to make California a "pilot" District, with the understanding that if it didn't prove successful, it would be discontinued.

Under this new system, limited decision-making authority would be delegated to this newly created District, which would be governed by officers elected by the District priesthood. The District president, however, would only be recommended by the District and elected at the General Church level. The election of District officers, as well as the conducting of business, would take place at regularly scheduled District con-

ferences. Issues which pertained to the faith and doctrine or which had potential impact on the entire Church were to be submitted to the General Church for disposition.

California District Becomes a Reality

The era of the Districts dawned in Bell, California on June 26, 1954. It was here, under the leadership of Brother V. James Lovalvo, who had been elected president of the new District at the General Conference of April 1954, that the California District was organized. Brother Lovalvo set up the District in accordance with guidelines established by the General Church. (*General Church Minutes*, April 1, 1954, pp. 826-827) The following brothers were elected:

First Counselor	James Heaps
Second Counselor	Ben Ciccati
Secretary	Felix Buccellato
Assistant Secretary	Robert Watson, Jr.
Financial Secretary	Vincent Scalise
Treasurer	Harry Marshall
Librarian	John Azzinaro
Auditor	Robert Watson, Jr.
Historian	Rudy Meo
Missionary Fund Treasurer	Mark Randy

Michigan-Ontario District

Five years later, the Branches in Detroit and Canada asked for and received permission to organize into a District of their own, to be known as the Michigan-Canadian District. The request was approved by the April 1959 Conference of the General Church which also elected Brother Gorie Ciaravino as the first District president. (*General Church Minutes*, April 2, 1959, pp. 993-1003)

Later, the "Michigan-Canadian District" was changed to the "Michigan-Ontario District," because Michigan could not cover all of Canada.

Brother Gorie organized the new Michigan-Canadian District at Detroit Branch 2 on May 2, 1959. The following brothers were elected:

First Counselor	Querino Bologna
Second Counselor	Nicholas Pietrangelo
Secretary	Anthony Scolaro
Assistant Secretary	Dominic Moraco
Financial Secretary	Clifford Burgess
Treasurer	Joseph Milantoni
Librarian	John Buffa
Assistant Librarian	Matthew T. Miller
Auditors	Peter H. Capone and Anthony Gerace

Remainder of Church Districted

The following year, at the next April Conference, a committee was formed to study districting the remainder of the Church. At the same Conference, the committee submitted its findings and recommended that three more Districts be created: the Ohio District, the Pennsylvania District, and the Atlantic Coast District. The committee also recommended that all new Districts be organized under the same set of rules and regulations by which the California and Michigan-Canadian Districts were organized. (*General Church Minutes*, April 1960, pp. I020, I028, I029; *Rules and Regulations*, pp. I029-I032)

11

History
of the
General Missionary
Benevolent Association
(G. M. B. A.)

Chapter Eleven

O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God. Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever. Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good . . . Alma 37:35-37

During the closing months of the year 1904, a distinct cry was heard at the town of Lucyville, which today is known as Roscoe, Pennsylvania. A child was born. This was no flesh and blood child. It was a child conceived in the inspired intellect of Brother Alexander Cherry. It was the birth of the Missionary Benevolent Association (hereinafter referred to by its acronym, MBA). Brother Cherry, a man of remarkable foresight and idealism, perceived, with his usual clarity of vision, that an association of the nature of today's MBA was urgently needed among the saints for the purpose of learning more about God's dealing with humanity and of making such small contributions as they felt able to donate to the missionary labors of the priesthood.

The child of our story grew and so captivated the affections of the saints of Lucyville, that they took it to a Conference held in the Odd Fellows Hall at Monongahela, Pennsylvania during the early part of 1905 where it became the subject of considerable controversy. Despite the controversy, the zeal of those who had learned to love the infant association prevailed. The MBA was duly organized and given the Church's official stamp of approval. We regret that the records of the first 30 years were subsequently lost in a fire. We have gleaned the facts as herein stated from the discontinued Church paper *The Gospel Reflector*, from the testimonies of our charter members, and especially from an early history

of the MBA that was researched by Sister Ruth Akerman and written by Brother James Curry for the 50th anniversary of the GMBA.

Whether by accident or design, the growing MBA seems not to have received the name it bears today until the Conference of October 1905. The appropriateness of this name is worth noting: MISSIONARY – meaning a person who attempts to persuade or convert to a particular doctrine or set of principles. BENEVOLENT – meaning kind, charitable, philanthropic, or loving mankind.

The general gatherings were held between the morning and afternoon sessions of Saturday General Church Conference, which later was changed to the Friday before Conference.

First GMBA Officers Elected

Some of the first officers of the association were as follows:

President	Elizabeth Cadman Davidson
Vice President	George Garrett
Chaplain	Lawrence Dias
Secretary	Wesley Bost
Financial Secretary	Richmond Skillen
Treasurer	Harry Nicholson
Librarian	Lillian Dias

The following is excerpted from the history recorded for the GMBA's 50th anniversary:

... The MBA is chiefly for the young, though the older ones are encouraged to participate. It instills a knowledge of the scriptures in the minds of the young, which they could not otherwise commonly acquire. It encourages a godly discipline, the value of which cannot be exaggerated. The older members discovered at the very beginning that the pleasure of the Lord rested upon their gatherings. Their minds expanded wonderfully as the illuminating light of Heaven attended their study of the scriptures.

In 1929, after twenty-five years, there were but five locals.

... Despite a stiff attitude adopted toward the MBA by some branches of the church, we have seen the association overcome many prejudices,

winning its way from Pennsylvania, into Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, Kansas, New York, California and the Dominion of Canada.

. . . The editor of the discontinued Church newspaper, *The Gospel Reflector*, referred to the MBA as an open door for all: "With your permission, I will say that all persons should be members of the Missionary Benevolent Association because of the scriptural instruction that we receive and helping hand it holds out to the non-professor as well as the church member. It is our duty to assist the unbelievers to believe and to teach the unlearned in the work of God, that they may come to Christ through His Word. I feel very much interested in the assembly, as it is sometimes called, for it is an open door, as a stepping stone, and for the young an excellent approach to the church."

There can be no doubt that many have found the gift of eternal life by first embracing the lofty ideals, the elevating precepts of the MBA.

Thus the enabling works of the MBA of the past persuades us to believe that it has a glorious future. Let us remember the exemplary life of Brother Cherry, the founder, whose motive in founding the MBA was to advance the cause of Christ and the Restored Gospel through this medium.

When the official records begin in February of 1934, the officers of the GMBA were:

President	Henry Johnson
Vice President	James Heaps
Chaplain	Anthony DiBattista
Corresponding Secretary	Hannah Skillen
Assistant and Financial Secretary	Sarah Cadman
Treasurer	Mabel Bickerton
Treasurer, Book of Mormon Fund	John Cherry
Librarian	Concetta Dentino
Organizers	Henry Johnson, John Ross, and Patsy Fyre

During the period of February 1934 through November 1947, the GMBA held four conferences per year—February, May, August, and November—holding their elections during the August conference. The conferences rotated locations and the host local was responsible for preparing the meals and presenting the spiritual program, which concluded

every conference. The officers frequently reminded the congregation that the emphasis of the GMBA was on the youth of the Church, and they strove to involve the youth in all aspects of the meetings. Often the programs were directed by the youth of the host local.

Early Growth of the GMBA

The locals organized as of February 1934 were:

Roscoe, Pennsylvania	6/16/1905 (first local known as Lucyville and Dunlevy)
Monongahela, Pennsylvania	(dates unknown—several locals in Monongahela)
Youngstown, Ohio	1920
Detroit #1, Michigan	4/20/1921
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania	9/2/1923
Lorain, Ohio	12/25/1927
Detroit #3, Michigan	11/28/1933
Glassport, Pennsylvania	(date unknown)
Muncey, Ontario, Canada	(date unknown)
Rock Run, Pennsylvania	(date unknown—eventually merged with Glassport)

Locals organized during the years 1934 through 1947 were:

New Jersey	1/17/1935 (started as New Brunswick Local)
Detroit #4, Michigan	7/17/1935
Eldora, Pennsylvania	8/15/1935
Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania	7/23/1939
Warren, Ohio	9/28/1940
Detroit #2, Michigan	4/26/1941
McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania	1942
Bronx/Brooklyn, New York	1942
Greensburg, Pennsylvania	6/23/1946
Rochester, New York	9/7/1946
San Diego, California	12/27/1946

In some cases, it was difficult to determine the actual date a local was organized, as the GMBA Organizers were kept very busy during these years. Locals were frequently organized, then later disbanded due to “lack of interest,” “poor attendance,” or “having difficulties,” then again reorganized at a later date—sometimes within the same calendar year. It was remarked in the November 12, 1938 conference at Glassport, Pennsylvania by the different brethren on the work of the MBA, how it has “grown and spread as far as Canada, Detroit, and New Jersey in spite of opposition, but we were advised to press onward and try and keep our young people together.”

Much of the years 1940 and 1941 were spent in revising the by-laws of the association. In 1940, a “machine committee” was appointed to “look after the mimeograph machine.” The years 1942-43 saw some hard times because of World War II, raising the question, should the GMBA continue to hold quarterly meetings in light of the gasoline rationing? But, as usual, they put it in the Lord’s hands, and no conferences were canceled or postponed.

Issue—Women in Leadership Roles

Also raised during this period was an issue revolving around the office of the president of a local MBA. Specifically,

Brother Cadman remarked that a member of the GMBA had approached him on whether it was proper to elect a woman for the office of the president of the MBA. The word “he” is used in the by-laws and Brother Cadman said that the correct interpretation of the word “he” when used in a general sense is he or she. A woman may become president of the MBA.

Use of Musical Instruments

The year 1944 brought a new controversy. In the May 13, 1944 GMBA conference at Lorain, Ohio, “A motion was made to condemn the action of the Bronx Local for permitting the violin to be played at their meetings. A discussion followed and the motion was not passed.”

The issue was tabled until the August 12, 1944 meeting, at which time a communication was read from W.H. Cadman, noting that “He expressed his views on the matter of using musical instruments, being opposed to any instrument except the piano played at the time of worship, but did not object in a program.”

The troubles of the world continued into the year 1945. In the February 10, 1945 conference held at Glassport, Pennsylvania, Bro. Cadman reported that he had “written to [the Federal Government in] Washington [D.C.] regarding our conference or any gathering. Washington [D.C.] banned any out of town gatherings that consisted of more than fifty members arriving from various localities. A motion was passed to forego the May 1945 meeting. . . The August 1945 meeting would be held providing the present ban would be lifted.” It was lifted, allowing the saints to travel to Monongahela, Pennsylvania for the August 11th conference that year. During that conference, a motion was passed to send a hymn book to the White House.

During this year, *The Gospel News* was born. Excerpts of articles and letters spoke of the MBA, some of which follow:

. . . I am interested in the Missionary Benevolent Association. To me it is the stepping-stone to the Church. The MBA is a wonderful association, especially for the young people. . . . (Frank Giovanne, *The Gospel News*, April 1945)

. . . The evening meeting was occupied by the Missionary Benevolent Association and we had an enjoyable time in singing hymns of praise to our God . . . Yours in Christ, Ishmael D’Amico. (I. D’Amico, “A Letter from Rochester,” *The Gospel News*, June 1945)

. . . Recently the Sabbath School class, known as the Class of Ruth of Monongahela, had a topic in the MBA meeting on the “Mountains of the Bible and The Book of Mormon.” Events which concern them make interesting reading to us. Eight girls took part in the meeting and gave the account or history of these mountains, which *The Gospel News* will publish each month. . . . (“Mountains of Fame,” *The Gospel News*, October 1945)



"Class of Ruth" of the Monongahela Branch Sunday School at a picnic, 1948:
 (front row): Irene Griffith, Sadie Cadman, Mabel Bickerton, Ruth Mountain;
 (back row): Jennie Sarver, Sara Vancik, Rose Scaglione, Thelma Campbell
 Mary Cherry, Minnie Griffith, Nancy Surace, Ruth Kirschner,
 Sarah Neill, and Margaret (Peg) Johnson

These articles continued for several months. There were several articles describing local, as well as general MBA gatherings, many of them describing their lessons or a program that was shared during the gathering. Following is a poem by Michael Piacentino, which was published in the August 1946 issue, entitled "Verses":

*Do you attend the MBA that's held each Friday night?
 Do you suppose by staying home you get the same delight?
 Do you think an extra meeting would be too much for you?
 Or are you one that's learned it all, for you there's nothing new?*

*Is your Book of Mormon laying, full of dust upon the shelf?
 Are you thinking less of God each day, and more about yourself?
 Are you going all out for Jesus, while you enjoy good health?
 Or is your time all taken up accumulating wealth?*

*When you are working part time, can you expect full pay?
 Or do you say "I'm busy now, I'll join some other day"?
 Just ask yourself these questions, upon them meditate.
 Then take the matter up with God, and He will put you straight.*

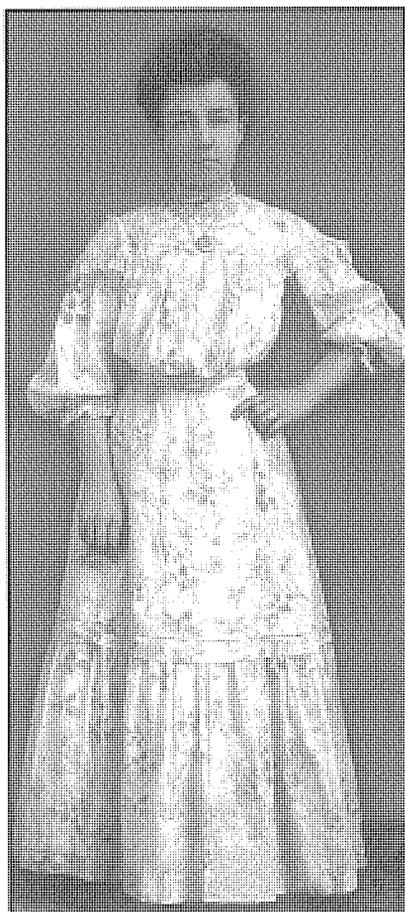
*Remember that your efforts here below are not in vain,
You've not a thing to lose, but everything to gain,
When you attend the MBA you're sure to gain some knowledge,
That isn't taught in grade school, universities, or college.*

*We extend an invitation to all both young and old
To those who once were members and since have grown cold
So accept this invitation friends, at once without delay
And come to church next Friday night and join the MBA."*

Changes at the GMBA Level

It was from a motion presented in the May 17, 1947 Conference that a proposal was sent out to the locals to consider reducing the number of conferences per year from four to two, to be conducted in May and November each year. The proposal was subsequently passed and, beginning in 1948, conferences were limited to two per year.

The number of conferences was not the only major change the GMBA saw in 1948. The Corresponding Secretary—Hannah Skillen—who had held this position for more than 25 years, stepped down from her office. A motion was passed that she be made "Honorary Secretary" as long as she lived. She held this office until her death in 1960.



Hannah Skillen

Expansion into the West and South

Locals organized during the years 1948 through 1960 were:

Bell, California	4/3/1948
San Fernando Valley, CA	Between 1951 and 1953
Kinsman, Ohio	5/25/1952 (Organized as Niles, name changed in 1956)
Modesto, California	11/5/1952
Lockport, New York	3/19/1955
Perry, Ohio (Painesville)	8/17/1955
Imperial, Pennsylvania	2/28/1957
Fredonia, Pennsylvania	1/4/1958
Lake Worth, Florida	9/8/1958

These years saw the MBA spreading across the country and maturing as an organization. Again, there were numerous articles in *The Gospel News*, too many to quote them all, describing special MBA meetings and gatherings. A few excerpts follow:

. . . The week ending January 24, 1947, Brothers William H. Cadman, Rocco Biscotti and I visited the brothers and sisters in New Jersey. . . . The MBA gathered at the Stelton church at 7:30 pm, and they turned their meeting over to the visiting brethren. Brothers Cadman and Biscotti gave us an interesting discourse, the principal being—Joseph's rise from slavery and imprisonment, to become Governor of Egypt. (Charles Ashton, "New York and New Jersey," *The Gospel News*, March 1948)

. . . It is reported that a very nice time was had at the GMBA meeting held recently in Hopelawn, New Jersey. It is said that a large crowd was present and that two converts were baptized over the weekend. . . ." ("Rumors," *The Gospel News*, June 1948)

. . . The Glassport MBA called a special gathering of surrounding locals for the purpose of having appointed meetings of this same type in the future. The local holding the meeting is to have a program of entertainment for the visiting locals, this being a suggestion of the GMBA. We had an attendance of about 150. . . . In a limited discussion we decided to carry on these meetings for the benefit of each other. . . .

(Florence DiBattista, "Meeting at Glassport, Pennsylvania," *The Gospel News*, July 1949)

The years 1950 and 1951 produced an "Organizer's Guide." Also in 1951, another first – the GMBA went to Windsor, Canada for its November 11, 1950 Conference. *The Gospel News* article in the January issue of that year reported "A large crowd was present with delegates from Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Canada. . . ."

Not only did the GMBA travel, so did the locals. On the road in 1952, the Vanderbilt MBA local visited the Rochester Local.

Dear Editor, The weekend of June 28, we had the pleasure of entertaining about 40 MBA members from the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania local. . . . Monday morning the Vanderbilt group left Rochester. They stopped to visit Hill Cumorah on their way home. . . . (Antoinette Marinetti, "News from Rochester," *The Gospel News*, August 1952)

The first "Special Projects Fund" was established in 1953. The purpose was to cover the cost of printing The Book of Mormon in Italian. That same year also featured the first spiritual gathering. We quote from the minutes of the May 16, 1953 conference:

Brother [Dominic] Thomas [GMBA President] spoke concerning this being our first Spiritual Gathering and what a wonderful privilege to have this opportunity and how it should be a spiritual uplifting to all present. Brother [Thurman] Furnier then spoke, refreshing our minds concerning the MBA as an organization. [He read] to us the objective of this organization and impressed upon our minds the importance of living up to this objective. He also dwelled upon The Book of Mormon, relating to us the faith of Jared and his brother and the records that we now have, and also in regards to the records that are sealed and yet to come forth. If we live close enough and faithful enough to the Lord and if our faith would be as the faith of Jared and his brother, these sealed records would come forth. He urged the young people to be those servants that the Lord expects us to be so we may be able to bring about a greater work than those who went before us. Testimony followed. . . .

The year 1954 brings us the fiftieth anniversary of the MBA of The Church of Jesus Christ. To all the locals who have made the MBA so successful, we humbly say, may God bless you with a healthy, prosperous, and peaceful New Year. (Dominic Thomas, President; Joseph Calabrese, Vice President; Dominic Moraco, Chaplain; and Ruth Akerman, Secretary)

GMBA's Golden Jubilee

The above was printed on a card that was sent to all members of the MBA in 1954, kicking off the 50th Anniversary of the MBA. The majority of the May 15, 1954 conference was devoted to the "Golden Jubilee." After dispensing with some business, the minutes state that "the remainder of the time was given over almost exclusively to expressions of appreciation for the wealth of experience gained by various members through past years of service to the MBA. Under the skillful questioning of GMBA President, Brother [Dominic] Thomas, Sister Elizabeth Davidson, Charter Member and 1st President of the GMBA spoke of [the] . . . growth of this association. Brother Gorie Ciaravino, former GMBA President of more recent years, spoke ably and learnedly of how our lives should portray the ideals of the MBA. . . . A young woman from the Grand River Reservation testified to the value of the MBA in leading her to the knowledge of The Book of Mormon. Brother Joseph Milantoni offered a prayer for the young people. Brother Charles Ashton in a short talk likened the MBA to a stepping-stone, which leads to higher things. He advocated a marriage (a closer relationship) between the MBA and the Church. . . . The [evening] meeting was . . . turned over to the Glassport Local for their program, which was to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of this association. A history was then read of the MBA, which was gleaned from the discontinued Church paper, *The Gospel Reflector* and the testimonies of our Charter Members. A poem, "Golden Anniversary," written by Sister Catherine Poma of California, was then read. . . .

Golden Anniversary

*Just 50 years ago, today,
The MBA was started;
It's one intent . . . to smooth the way
For all the heavy hearted.*

*For Jesus said, so long ago,
If by my side you tarry,
I'll take away the awful woe
That in your heart you carry.*

*And so a group of stalwart saints,
Filled with the spirit's glory,
Began to preach, without restraint,
That wonderful sweet story.*

*Of how a soul, all weighted down,
With anger, sin or sorrow,
Must turn to Him, of great renown
To find peace for the morrow.*

*And tho' the harvest thru the years,
Has not met expectations,
We know that when the Lord appears,
He will convert all nations.*

*So we commemorate this day
To the unceasing labor,
Of those who hope and work and pray,
And in the Lord, find favor.*

The highlight of the program was the presentation of a yellow carnation by President, Brother [Dominic] Thomas, to each of the four charter members present—Sisters Elizabeth Davidson and Elizabeth Toye and Brothers Isaac Smith and William Bailey. Brothers W. H. Cadman, Charles Ashton, Gorie Ciaravino, Melvin Mountain, Dominic Thomas and Sisters Hannah Skillen and Mabel Bickerton also received yellow carnations in recognition of their years of meritorious service to the

MBA. Sister Florence DiBattista sang "A Memory," the lyrics of which were written by Brother James Curry and was dedicated to the charter members:

A Memory

(To the tune of Hymn #III, "A Memory," in the Saints Hymnal)

1. *Today I live in mem'ry of the long ago
And scenes of yesteryear gone by,
Revive and freshen with their afterglow – and cheer
The hope that springs eternal from the sky.*

2. *Today I count the years I spent in His employ
As brim with satisfied desire;
My cup of gladness doth abound with sacred joy,
Spills over at the fount of sacred fire.*

3. *My fondest hope is that in years to come we may
See blessings at the open door,
And youthful feet find promise in the rugged way,
Where faithful saints have trod the way before.*

Chorus:

*Memory, memory, blessed memory that leads me back to years
gone by,
In the MBA He found me,
Jesus put His arms around me,
'Tis a memory that cannot die.*

During that year (1954) a tally was taken of the MBA membership, which totaled over 1,000 members.

The year 1955 saw the GMBA on the road again, this time to Rochester, New York. The May conference dismissed early so that those who so desired could visit the Hill Cumorah. There were 26 cars in the procession to Palmyra, where they met at the Sacred Grove to learn the history of Joseph Smith.

In 1956 the question was raised as to the minimum age of a child to join the MBA. After much discussion and study, the conference rejected the motion to establish guidelines for a minimum age.

The May 1956 GMBA was privileged to be visited by Brother A. A. Dick from Africa. The August 1956 issue of *The Gospel News* notes: “. . . he spoke briefly in the morning, giving his impression of the Church here in America and telling of the conditions of the Church in Africa. . . . [That evening] Brother William Cadman showed slides . . . taken on his trip to Africa.”

Blessings and Baptisms at the November 1956 Conference

During the GMBA Conference in New Jersey on November 1956, “. . . During the meeting and after, five persons asked to be baptized at the conference, and one didn’t want to wait until morning.” During the Sunday meeting which was well attended as “the building was filled to capacity . . . two more asked to be baptized there and three stated their intentions to be baptized at their home branches. This was a GMBA conference that will long be remembered. . . .”, as indicated in the following *Gospel News* articles.

. . . This was a GMBA conference that will long live in the hearts and memories of those who attended. . . . (Ruth E. Akerman, “GMBA Holds Conference in New Jersey,” *The Gospel News*, January 1957)

. . . Several car loads of young people from our Branch managed to attend the GMBA. I being one of them, can say that God blessed us all. The Conference was wonderful with about 300 attending. Truly the Spirit of God conducted our services. We are happy to know of the several baptisms . . . two of them attend our Branch. We welcome them with open arms, praying they will find much joy in their new life. The saints in New Brunswick were wonderful to all, and we did feel at home. Truly we found a brother and a friend. May the Lord bless and keep you all. (Ilene Coppa, “Detroit, Michigan,” *The Gospel News*, January 1957)

. . . After the close of the afternoon session, two young men from Youngstown, Ohio asked for their baptism. The attending congregation witnessed a battle between the power of God and that of evil. After anointment and prayer the power of evil was defeated again and the young man in whom the conflict raged asked to be baptized. . . . (Joe Ross, "A Blessed Weekend." *The Gospel News*, April 1957)

. . . I returned home from the GMBA Conference in New Jersey, with my heart full of the spirit, and thankfulness, for the wonderful blessings we received, and how the Spirit of the Lord was made manifest among our young people at these meetings. Yet my heart became troubled as I thought of how young some of the converts were, and I felt to pray to God in their behalf that they would be given strength and protection from the many temptations that would be sure to come their way; so I



Lou Vitto, Frank Morle, and
Norman Campitelle at a Michigan-
Ontario Area MBA Conference,
circa 1960

knelt beside my bed and poured out my heart to God, that he would keep them always faithful in the church. After I went to bed, I lay for some time in meditation on the matter when a voice spoke to me saying, "Your heart is troubled because you have thought these young people may have come into the church because of their friends or the desires of their parents, but these young people have come into the Church, not because of their friends or their parents, but because they discovered salvation for themselves." Needless to say this gave me much relief and

happiness and we still rejoice in the blessing. (Gasper Karelli, "An Experience," *The Gospel News*, April 1957)

Concept of Districting GMBA Gains Momentum

Seven years after the saints in Pennsylvania began meeting as a group, the GMBA President "suggested that perhaps a group of locals that were closely situated to one another in an area organize themselves into a district organization, with district officers, for the purpose of creating wider interest and activities in the MBA." In the January 1957 issue of *The Gospel News* it reports:

. . . During this meeting the assembly discussed the organizing of the MBA into regional districts to promote social and spiritual activities of the respective regional areas. Districts were not organized, but a step was made in that direction by authorizing the locals of regional areas to form joint committees to sponsor joint local activities and by forming a GMBA committee to investigate and discuss the matter and to report on its findings to the next GMBA conference.

The years 1956 through 1959 were devoted to developing the structure for the Area MBA's. Articles in *The Gospel News* reported on the blessings that accompanied these meetings:

. . . The first area gathering of the Missionary Benevolent Association in the State of Ohio was held in Lorain on January 26, 1957. . . . ("Ohio MBA Gathering," *The Gospel News*, April 1957)

. . . The MBA locals in the Monongahela-Ohio River Valley have been enjoying the blessing of God through their MBA area gatherings. . . . ("Pennsylvania Enjoys Fellowship in MBA Area Gatherings," *The Gospel News*, July 1957)

GMBA Summer Gathering

The Conference held in May of 1959 passed a proposal to hold a GMBA Summer Spiritual Gathering. This gathering was held August 14–15, 1959. Speakers at this gathering included Brothers W. H. Cadman, Gorie Ciaravino, Guido Marinetti, Donald Curry, Patsy Marinetti,

Alvin Swanson, and Joseph Milantoni. The theme of the gathering was missionary work. The Saturday afternoon portion of the gathering included a panel discussion.

In the year 1959, a motion was passed for a committee (consisting of the GMBA president, vice president, chaplain, secretary, and Brothers Isaac Smith and Donald Curry) to confer with the General Church concerning a centrally located building for our GMBA conferences. In 1960, the GMBA established a fund "from which the General Church might draw to purchase property to build a central meeting place. . . . This fund is to be separately recorded in the financial records and is to be held in reserve and made available to the General Church for the above stated purpose if the General Church develops a definite program of action in this regard. . . . A free will offering amounting to \$255 initiated the building fund."

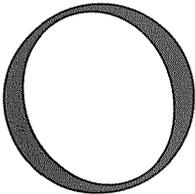
It should be noted that throughout the years 1934 to 1960, the GMBA recorded expenses totaling just short of \$20,000. Of this, 29% was in support of missionary work, 33% was used for the printing of literature (Book of Mormon, English and Italian, Italian Hymnals), and 15% supported various General Church projects and funds.

12

History
of the
General Ladies
Uplift Circle

Chapter Twelve

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. . . . Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. . . Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Proverbs 31:10, 25, 26, 28

rganized in 1920, the Ladies' Uplift Circle of The Church of Jesus Christ has given the sisters of the Church the opportunity to fellowship together and work for the benefit of the Church. Many fund-raising efforts over the years have resulted in special donations and the purchase of needed supplies and equipment, much of it for missionary work.

Each member of the Ladies' Circle belongs to a local Circle, which meets on a regular basis in a local Branch of the Church or in the home of a sister. All members of local Circles are also members of the General Ladies' Circle, which held four meetings per year during the period of time covered by this volume. Special anniversary meetings were held to commemorate the 30th and 35th Anniversaries of the Ladies' Circle in 1950 and 1955, respectively.

“How Lost Were Our Days Til We Met with the Gospel”

Sister Sadie Mains Cadman, wife of General Church President Brother William H. Cadman, was born on June 12, 1878. She served as General Circle President since the Circle was organized in 1920 until 1957, two years prior to her death on November 18, 1959.

From her youth, she had a great desire to be a missionary. Her mother died when she was just a young girl. Her father, being a Quaker, was strict in observing the Sabbath. Through this early religious training

young Sadie sought the Lord. She became a member of the United Brethren Church in McKeesport, Pennsylvania when she was 14 years old and became active in her church as a Sunday School teacher and organist.

Sister Sadie recalls her first exposure to The Church of Jesus Christ:

When I heard them preach, it seemed to be just what I had longed for. It was to me what food is to a person who is hungry. I became interested and wanted to go back again, and did so. . . . Finally, I lost all desire for the Church to which I belonged. I didn't join the Church for almost two years . . . but prayed earnestly to God to let me see and know for myself if this was the true way and His true Church. I couldn't see that I was a sinner, nor why I would need to be baptized. I had been sprinkled [referring to the baptism received in the church to which she currently belonged] and thought that ought to do. But God showed me in a dream, and I realized I [needed to be baptized, and] that I was a sinner. I was not persuaded by any person or persons. . . .

I was baptized on October 26, 1902 and had hands laid on my head by the elders of the Church for the reception of the Holy Ghost. When I came out of the water, I felt that I had a clean heart. After the brethren laid hands on my head, I was given such a satisfaction that I realized I had been born again as Christ had told Nicodemus.

. . . My mind has been drawn to . . . Hymn No. 375 so much; it just speaks the sentiments of my heart:

*How lost were our days, till we met with the gospel.
The creeds and the systems seemed powerless and vain.
We ne'er received precepts, so suited to save us,
as those by the priesthood restored again.*

*In the wisdom of men, we had long been entangled;
and forms without power encircled us round;
but now we rejoice in the hope of redemption;
and peace to the faithful doth ever abound.*

I can truly say that my days were lost until I met with the Gospel. I feel it my duty, since I have been brought into the truth, to show others the way of life and salvation, and know that I must testify to the world to clear my garments. For when I was in the world I led many to Christ,

as I supposed, but I have often said, "It was the blind leading the blind."
(*The Gospel News*, November 1963)

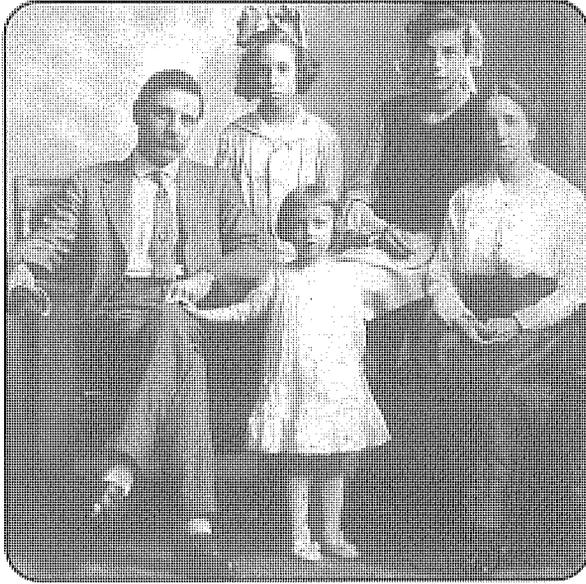
Sister Sadie married Brother William H. Cadman in June 1901, and later attended the Branch of the Church in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. She received the following experience not long after her baptism:

I was sitting in church and felt the Spirit of God take hold of me and put my feet on the floor; and I realized they were as iron and could not be moved. These words came to me: "How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord." Now, these are not imaginary. Man cannot give us these things; neither can he take them away, but the Lord. (*The Gospel News*, November 1963)

Although Sister Sadie was crippled and used crutches for over fifty years, it did not hinder her from being active in the Church. In addition to being president of the General Ladies Circle for 37 years, she was a member of the Hymn Book Committee and composed some hymns of her own. One of her best-known compositions is, "Oh Paradise," number 51 in the *Saints Hymnal*. She wrote a Bible Lesson Book for Sunday School use and was a Sunday School teacher for many years; all of this in spite of the fact that she had very little schooling of her own. However, she was self-educated, especially through the study of God's Word. At the time of her death, she was working on a concordance of The Book of Mormon, which was later completed by her daughter, Sister Sara Vancik, and published by the Church.

Sister Cadman was very interested in the missionary work of the Church. When able, she accompanied Brother Cadman and others on visits throughout the Church. Many American Indians came to love her, and she inspired the Nigerian members through her correspondence with them. Her patience and cheery disposition were an inspiration, and she was loved by all those who knew her.

With all her Church activities, she did not neglect her home. She sewed for her family, did most of the housework and the cooking. She and Brother Cadman had four daughters, Sisters Mabel Bickerton, Ruth



William H. and Sadie Cadman (Ladies' Uplift Circle President)
with daughters: left to right, top: Ruth (Mountain), Mabel
(Bickerton) and Sara (Vancik), center

Mountain, Sara Vancik, and Grace Landrey, and many grandchildren. Their daughters all became active and productive members of The Church of Jesus Christ.

In the year of 1946, the Ladies' Circle held their four General Conferences at Monongahela, Pennsylvania and Youngstown, Ohio. They contributed to many projects during that year, such as the purchase of an electric stove for the Church farm at Muncey, Ontario, Canada. A new Circle was organized during that year in San Diego, California with six members. Election of General officers was held at the June 1947 meeting in Glassport, Pennsylvania. The following officers were elected:

President	Sadie Cadman
Vice-President	Elizabeth Davidson
Secretary	Mary Wilson
Financial Secretary	Hannah Skillen
Treasurer	Sara Vancik

The General Circle continued to make regular donations to various worthwhile projects throughout the Church, especially in support of missionary work among the Native American. A motion was passed to continue holding the General Circle Conference on the Thursday before the General Church Conference, with the option that the hosting Circle could change it to the previous Saturday.

At the June 1948 General Circle meeting at Niles, Ohio, the Circle turned over its printing fund, in the amount of \$53, to the General Church Librarian. There were many sisters present at this meeting, some from as far away as St. John, Kansas. After the business was completed the meeting was continued with many testimonies of thankfulness for all of God's blessings.

On June 3, 1950, the General Ladies' Circle met in Monongahela in honor of their 30 years of service to the Church. A large crowd gathered, coming from several states and Canada. This was the third time since the formation of the Circle that an anniversary celebration had been held. One of the charter members, Sister Hannah Skillen, gave the welcome address. Sister Violet Sarver read a poem given to her as she meditated upon this anniversary:

*It's the thirtieth anniversary of the Circle,
It's the reason we are gathered in this way,
To humbly pray and praise our Redeemer,
For our Ladies' Uplift Circle in our day.*

*It has taught us to read and search the scriptures,
It has brought peace and joy into our lives;
And the hours we spend in blest devoted service,
Is worth far more than time we sacrifice.*

*We try to help the weak and heavy burdened
By remembering them with flowers or cards of cheer,
We visit when we can, the sick and suffering,
Of all, who have become to us, so dear.*

*God has multiplied our mites to great proportions
So in numerous ways our Church's needs supply;
For which we thank our Lord in true devotion,
And upon His Uplift Spirit do rely.*

*We meditate upon that Heavenly Circle,
What a grand and glorious meeting it will be,
As our sisters come to greet us over yonder,
In perfect happiness and ecstasy.*

*We will recognize their dear and radiant faces,
Their loved voices hear and listen to once more,
As our Ladies' Uplift Circle holds their meeting,
And we assemble over there, to part no more.*

President Sadie Cadman gave a brief history. She reported a total of 21 Circles with a total membership of 312. The new Circles organized in the past four years were Niles, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Charleroi, Pennsylvania; Port Huron, Michigan; and Erie, Pennsylvania. The Lord surely blessed the efforts of the Circle, both spiritually and financially. Since the previous anniversary, the Circle had given \$2,154 to the American Indian Missionary work, plus \$285 to the Church Missionary Fund. Delegates were present from 19 of the 21 Circles. Each Circle presented its own history and program and, as they gave their reports, all heard of the good deeds that each Circle had done.

Mrs. Nina Martin, a friend of one of the sisters from Detroit, Branch #4, related the following experience:

On Monday, I had a great desire to attend the Ladies' Circle with a friend, Sister Concetta Piccalo. I told Sister Piccalo of my sister in Italy who was very ill, and that I desired that the sisters of the Circle would pray in her behalf. The doctors claimed that she had a tumor on her brain, and they were very doubtful about operating. My sister was suffering terrible pains, which were unbearable. That evening, the sisters had decided to turn their meeting over to prayer in behalf of the sick throughout the Church. I decided to tell the sisters of my sister in Italy so they could offer their hearts to God in her behalf. I can certainly say that the Lord blessed the sisters that night in their prayer meeting. That

night I had a dream I was in the hospital visiting my sister, and I saw a beautiful man dressed all in white walk into the room. I knew right away that this man was the Lord. He then walked up to my sister in bed and placed His hands on her head; then I awoke. Later I received a letter from my sister in Italy that on the day she underwent the examinations, the doctors could not find anything wrong with her health. The doctors were greatly amazed, but I know that the Lord had been her doctor. My sister is now enjoying good health in the United States.

The following is a dream received by Sister Lillian Coppa of New Brunswick, New Jersey:

I dreamed I saw Sister Sadie Cadman and Sister Hannah Skillen coming to my home and, as they entered, Sister Cadman had a round gold pin, which had on it an inscription, LADIES CIRCLE. I asked Sister Cadman what it was for, and she replied that she was giving one to each of the members of the Ladies' Circle. As she handed me one, I wanted to give her something in return and asked [whether] it would be all right to donate one dollar. She answered with a smile and said YES. Then I awoke.

A memorial was held for the Ladies' Circle sisters who had passed on to their eternal reward. As the names were mentioned, two little girls placed a white flower in a large circle placed on a stand.

Sister Anna Frammolino, one of the first members of the Circle in Detroit, spoke a few words. She compared the Circle to a good wife. She stated that every home needs a good husband and what a help to him a good wife is. So the Circle, like a good wife, is a great help to the Church.

Later, when remembering the blessings of this anniversary meeting, the sisters' hearts were saddened to think of the sorrow that was brought to some. On the way home from this meeting there was a car accident, which resulted in the death of Sister Margaret Shuster of Coal Valley, Pennsylvania.

At the September 15, 1951 meeting, a request was received from Brother Anthony Brutz for prayer on behalf of the American Indian work. A part of the meeting was devoted to special prayer on their behalf and for those brethren who were preaching the Gospel to them.

In the March 1952 Conference, a letter was received from Brother Joseph Loalvo thanking the sisters for the \$150 donation for the work in Sarnia, Canada. He told of anointing a young Indian boy whose feet were frozen, and he was healed instantly. He also told of visiting an Indian woman who was critically ill. After arriving home, Sister Virginia Loalvo asked the Ladies' Circle to pray for this woman. When Brother Loalvo returned to Sarnia, he visited her and she was well and able to attend Church.

The General Ladies' Circle met at Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania in June 1953. The Circle donated \$200 toward the purchase of a station wagon for the work on the Six Nations Reservation in Canada. One hundred dollars were donated to Brother Bittinger for his work in preaching the Gospel to the Seed of Joseph in South Dakota.

The General Church requested that in the future, since the Church now had an Indian Mission Fund, the Circle would make their donations directly to this fund and the Church would distribute the money where needed. When missionaries from the Church went to Nigeria, the Ladies'



Ladies Circle Gathering, 1957: (left to right) Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Josephine D'Amico, (girl unknown) Hannah Skillen, Edna Bittinger, Ruth Mountain, Ruth Akerman, William H. Cadman, Alma B. Cadman, Irene Griffith, Grace Landrey, Mabel Bickerton, Shirley Hemmings, Unknown, Virginia Martin, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, George Neill

Circle began to actively support that work, initially sending 25 Bibles printed in their own language.

The General Ladies' Uplift Circle held another anniversary meeting on July 2, 1955 at Monongahela, Pennsylvania, commemorating the 35 years since the first Ladies' Circle meeting. Sister Sadie Cadman expressed her happiness to see how the Circle had progressed in the United States, and even in a place as far away as Nigeria, Africa, in the past five years since the last anniversary meeting. Up to this date, the General Circle had given \$11,647 to the Church for the African work. In addition to contributing money, they helped in other ways as well, such as by donating hymn books, copies of The Book of Mormon, Church Histories and Bibles to various missions.

The General Circle also helped fund the printing of much of the Church's literature. In June 1955, they offered to pay for the printing of 2,500 Sunday School Lesson Books, at a cost of \$525.

Five new Circles had been organized since 1950. They were Roscoe, Vanderbilt, and Rock Run, Pennsylvania; Manteka, California; and Lorain, Ohio. As of December 1954, there were also eight Circles in Africa with a total membership of 328.

The Circle rejoiced in remembering the many blessings God bestowed on them as they worked together during the years from 1955 to 1959. The Lord multiplied their offerings and they were able to help the Church in many ways. During those five years, they contributed \$5,235 to the American Indian Mission work, in addition to other needed supplies and literature.

In the June 1957 General Circle Meeting, Sister Sadie Cadman asked to be relieved of her office as president of the Ladies' Uplift Circle because of ill health. Sister Sadie felt that, since she could no longer travel as she once did, it would be best for the Circle that she retire. During her 37 years of service, she had become endeared to the hearts of all the sisters. She personified the hymn, "Give of Your Best to the Master," in spite of her afflictions. It is written, "She hath done what she could." The Circle sisters felt much gratitude for the work she had done in orga-



Celebrating Elizabeth Davidson's Birthday, standing behind "Sister Lizzie:" Sara Vancik, Unknown, Mabel Bickerton, Ruth Mountain, and Grace Landrey

nizing the Ladies' Uplift Circle that reached far and near and brought a blessing to all who joined it. She was a mother to all the sisters. In appreciation of her many years of service, the sisters elected Sister Sadie as honorary president. A year later a memorial fund was started in Sister Cadman's honor. Charter members Sisters Hannah Skillen and Elizabeth Davidson also resigned from their offices and were made honorary officers of the General Ladies' Circle.

Sister Mabel Bickerton was elected as the new president of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle. A sister related a dream she had in which she saw several sisters trying on Sister Sadie's clothes, and they would not fit. Then Sister Mabel tried them on and they fit perfectly. This dream was a confirmation to Sister Mabel's election. At that same meeting, Sister Ruth Akerman was elected to the office of vice-president and Sister Ilene Smith to the office of financial secretary. Sister Mary Wilson remained the secretary and Sister Sarah Vancik the treasurer.

Sister Margaret King of Lorain, Ohio had the following experience at the September 1958 General Circle: While Brother Russell Cadman was speaking about his visits among God's covenant people and the great work which is to be done among them, she saw Sister Mabel's face take on a glow. It seemed to glow from an inner peace and happiness. As her face became more radiant, it looked like a face in a shadow with a spotlight upon it. It was full of kindness, goodness, love, and peace. The Spirit of the Lord was felt so strongly that two girls in the front testified of seeing the same glow on Sister Mabel. They testified that a light seemed to shine down from heaven, causing Sister Mabel's face to glow in a heavenly light.

There has always been a spirit of love and unity in the Circle, and the sisters have always worked in harmony with the Church. Looking back over the past years, it is easy to say, surely goodness and mercy has followed the Circle and we hope our labors have not been in vain but shall bring forth more fruit in years to come.

*Circle is a golden chain
The links are sisters dear
And like rare and precious jewels
They're treasured more each day
And God looks down and blesses
Each Circle where friendship lives
And happy are the ones who know
The joy that Circle gives.*



Appendices
and
Bibliography

Appendix A
General Church Presidency
1862-2000

Year *	President	First Counselor	Second Counselor
1862	William Bickerton		
1863		Charles Brown Benjamin Meadowcroft	George Barnes 1873
1880	William Cadman, Sr.	Eli Kendall	Cummins Cherry
1881			John Ashton
1883		William Skillen	Robert Love
1887			Cummins Cherry
1889		Cummins Cherry	William Maxwell
1894			John Ashton
1903		Alexander Cherry	Allen Wright
1906		Alexander Cherry	Allen Wright
1907	William H. Cadman		William Lynch
1911			Nephi Federer
1915	Nephi Federer		William H. Cadman
1919	William H. Cadman		Charles Ashton
1922	William H. Cadman	Charles Ashton	John Grimes
1929			Robert Anderson
1939			Joseph Dulisse
1950			Thurman Furnier
1956		Thurman Furnier	Joseph Bittinger
1964	Thurman Furnier	Gorie Ciaravino	
1965	Gorie Ciaravino	Thurman Furnier	
1971		Dominic Thomas	
1974	Dominic Thomas	Gorie Ciaravino	V. James Loyalvo
1979		Nicholas Pietrangelo	
1992		Paul Palmieri	Robert A. Watson
1998			Thomas Liberto

* Year first elected to office

Appendix B
Quorum of Twelve Apostles
1862-1916

Year Ordained	Name(s)
July 1862	Joseph Astin, Alexander Bickerton, Arthur Bickerton, Thomas Bickerton, James Brown, William Cadman, Sr.; Cummings Cherry, John Dixon, Joseph Knox, Benjamin Meadowcroft, John Neish, James Nichols
Jan. 1863	George Barnes, Charles Brown
July 1863	William Bickerton
July 1865	William Bacon, William Skillen
Jan. 1870	Andrew Rattray
July 1873	James Louttit
July 1904	J. L. Armbrust, William H. Cadman, Marion Campbell, Alexander Cherry, Thomas Dixon, William Lynch, William Maxwell, James Skillen, Thornton Welch, John Williams, Allen Wright
July 1905	Solomon Van Lieu
July 1906	William Helms
July 1907	Francis Federer, Nephi Federer, John Grimes, Charles Tickhill
July 1908	Robert Anderson, Charles Ashton, Gustave Blum, Alma Cadman
July 1909	James Caldwell
July 1910	John Penn
July 1911	Vernon Chester, John Majoros
Oct. 1911	George Neill, Isaac Smith
Apr. 1912	Samuel Sanders, Fred Smith, John Ward
July 1914	Herman Kennedy, Harry Nicholson

Quorum of Twelve Apostles

1917-2000

Year Ordained	Name(s)
Oct. 1917	Thurman Furnier
Circa 1918	James C. Cowan
July 1919	Gustave Blum (reordained), E. J. Perry
Aug. 1923	Charles Behanna, Joseph Corrado, Martin King, Ishmael D'Amico
July 1925	Alma Cadman (reordained)
July 1931	Isaac Smith (reordained)
April 1934	John Falola, Sr.
July 1934	Joseph Dulisse
July 1939	Rocco Biscotti, Joseph Lovalvo
July 1941	Angelo Antonio Corrado, Samuel Kirschner, V. James Lovalvo
Jan. 1944	James C. Cowan (reordained)
Jan. 1948	Charles Behanna (reordained)
Apr. 1953	Joseph Bittinger, Paul D'Amico
Apr. 1956	Russell Cadman, Gorie Ciaravino, William Gennaro
Apr. 1964	Frank Calabrese, Dominic Thomas
May 1974	Nick Pietrangelo
Apr. 1979	Robert A. Watson
Oct. 1986	Paul Palmieri
Apr. 1989	Paul Benyola, Joseph Calabrese
Oct. 1995	Thomas M. Liberto
Oct. 1997	Peter Scolaro, Isaac Smith

Appendix C
Quorum of Seventy Evangelists
1862-1920

Year Ordained	Name(s)
July 1862	John Ashton, John Bickerton, James Caldwell, Charles Cowan, John McPherson, William Menzies, Hugh Scott, Thomas Stevens, James Thompson
Oct. 1904	Robert Anderson, Gustave Blum, J. C. Breckenridge, Samuel Campbell, William Crosby, James Curry, John Dillon, Francis Federer, Archibald Ferguson, John Grimes, Samuel Leonard, Cochran Lynch, G. W. Matthews, Abashi Risk, Samuel Sanders, Joseph Shutler, William Skillen, Thomas Sloan, Joseph Tucker, Sr., Solomon Van Lieu, William Wells
Jan. 1905	Charles Ashton, Nephi Federer, William Helms
Jan. 1908	Leslie Hardesty
July 1909	Charles Behanna, Vernon Chester, Richard Evans, William Weaver
Jan. 1910	John Penn, Fred Smith
July 1910	John Majoros, Charles Morgan, George Neill, Harry Nicholson, John Ward
Oct. 1910	George Garatt
Jan. 1911	Solomon King
Oct. 1914	James Cowan, Jacob Christman, Joseph Eason, Reese Jones, E. J. Perry, John Reconnu
Circa 1914-19	John Edwards, Alexander Federer, Charles Gilbert, Joseph Griffith, Charles Ligon, Shall Lowther, Amzi Lynn, Sr
July 1919	Fred Heath
Oct. 1919	George Cromblish, Charles F. Kennedy
July 1920	Joseph Corrado, Peter Garafola, John Molinatto, Ceasar Talamonti

Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

1921-1941

Year Ordained	Name(s)
July 1921	Ishmael D'Amico, Vincent DiGennaro, Joseph Dulisse, Joseph Molinatto
Jan. 1922	Fritz Ackerman, William Bailey, Charles Behanna, John Cherry, Clyde Gibson, Martin King, Augustus Martin, Robert Patterson, Albert Sarver, Oran Thomas
Oct. 1922	Walter Grimes
Oct. 1923	Samuel Ambrose, Ermengildo Ciccati, Carl Damore, Anthony DiBattista, Phillip Mileco, Peter Molinatto
July 1924	Patsy DiBattista, Venanzio DiThomas, John Jacobs, Andrew Nemeth, Eugene Perri, Sr.
Oct. 1926	Rocco Biscotti
July 1927	Angelo A. Corrado
Oct. 1929	Vincent Clemente, Gabriel Mazzeo
July 1930	Dominic Giovannone
July 1932	William DiGennaro
July 1933	Teman Cherry, James Heaps, Charles Sanders
July 1934	Joseph Altomare, William Bailey, Joseph Benyola, Fred Fair, Louis Mazzeo, Antonio Todaro
Jan. 1937	Samuel Kirschner, John Mancini, Ernest Shultz, Paul Vancik, Sr.
July 1937	V. James Lovalvo, Joseph Lovalvo, Matthew Miller, Wade Riggen
July 1939	Oran Thomas (Reordained), Joseph Tucker
July 1940	Joseph Bittinger, Gorie Ciaravino, Daniel Corrado, John Dulisse, Mark Randy
Apr. 1941	Clifford Burgess, Rocco Ensana, J. Frank Ford, James Heaps (reordained), Rocco Meo, Clarence Robinson, Frank Sirangelo

Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

1941-1956

Year Ordained	Name(s)
July 1941	Dan Casasanta, Frank Rosatti
Jan. 1943	Allen Henderson, George Manes
July 1943	Raymond Cosetti, Patsy Marinetti
Oct. 1943	Dominic Cotellesse, Ansel D'Amico
Jan. 1944	Nicholas Farragasso, Jr.
July 1945	Concetto Alessandro, Peter Capone, Henry Johnson
July 1946	Robert A. Watson
July 1947	Joseph Bologna
July 1948	Reno Bologna, Alfred D'Amico, Nicholas Pietrangelo, William Tucker
July 1949	Paul D'Amico, Vincent Lupo, Joseph Shazer, Christopher Trovato
Apr. 1950	Dominic Moraco, Warren Nellis, Robert M. Watson
Oct. 1950	Travis Perry
Apr. 1951	Timothy Dominic Bucci
Apr. 1952	Alexander Robinson
Oct. 1952	Herman Kennedy (Reordained)
Apr. 1953	William Tucker
Apr. 1954	Joseph Milantoni
Oct. 1954	Louis Mazzeo
Apr. 1955	Paul Benyola, Russell Cadman
Apr. 1956	Frank Giavonnone
Oct. 1956	A. A. Dick, Ralph Leet
Nov. 1956	Joseph Capone

Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

1957-1969

Year Ordained	Name(s)
Apr. 1957	John Ross
May 1957	Dominic Thomas
June 1957	Idris Martin
Oct. 1957	James Campbell
Apr. 1958	Joseph Calabrese
Apr. 1959	Frank Calabrese, Alfred Domenico, Nick Persico, Dominic Rose
May 1959	Felix Buccellato
Oct. 1960	Giuseppe Buonofiglio, Alvin Swanson
Apr. 1961	Leonard Lovalvo
Apr. 1962	Daniel Picciuto
Oct. 1962	Anthony Brutz
Apr. 1964	George Johnson, Sr.
Oct. 1964	Spencer G. Everett
May 1965	Benjamin Ciccati
Oct. 1966	Ralph Berardino, John Manes
Apr. 1967	Isaac D. Smith
Apr. 1968	Edward Purdue
May 1968	Richard Christman, Anthony Picciuto
Oct. 1968	Anthony Lovalvo
Apr. 1969	Meredith Griffith
May 1969	Anthony Gerace

Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

1969 - 1983

Year Ordained	Name(s)
Nov. 1969	Otto Henderson
May 1970	Vincent Gibson, Thomas M. Liberto, Elmer Santilli
Nov. 1970	John Azzinaro, Cleveland Baldwin, August D'Orazio, Matthew Rogolino
July 1971	Joseph Genaro
Aug. 1971	Giuseppe LoRicco
Apr. 1973	Charles Smith
Nov. 1973	Paul Benyola, Fred Olexa
Oct. 1974	Paul Palmieri
May 1975	Eugene Perri, Jr., Paul Vitto
June 1975	George Heaps
June 1976	Edem A. Ebong
May 1976	E.U.A. Arthur
Oct. 1976	James Grazan
Nov. 1976	Nephi DeMercurio, Frank Vitto
Apr. 1979	Nathan Peterkin, Russell Martorana
May 1979	Eugenio Mora Garcia
Nov. 1979	Bob Buffington
June 1980	George Benyola, Sr., Richard C. Santilli
May 1981	Mitchell Edwards
Oct. 1981	Samuel Dell
Nov. 1981	James R. Link
May 1982	John Griffith, Richard Scaglione
May 1983	Daniel Picciuto (Re-ordained)

Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

1983-1999

Year Ordained	Name(s)
July 1983	Carl Frammolino, Leonard A. Lovalvo, Louis Vitto
July 1984	Ether M. Furnier, Paul N. Liberto, Stephen Saffron
Sept. 1984	Frank Ciotti
Nov. 1985	Harry L. Smith
Dec. 1985	Dwayne Jordan
Nov. 1987	Paul Ciotti, Richard Lawson, James Moore, Joseph Perri
Apr. 1988	Paul Carr
Nov. 1988	Dennis Moraco, Larry Watson
Oct. 1989	Luis Pacheco, Joseph Ross
Nov. 1989	Vincent Arce, Peter H. Capone, Thomas Everett, Alex Gentile, Phillip Jackson, Peter A. Scolaro
Oct. 1991	Wayne R. Martorana
Feb. 1992	Ford K. Boadu
May 1992	Barry Mazzeo
Feb. 1994	George Frank Arthur
Oct. 1994	Phillip Arcuri
Nov. 1994	Joel Gehly, Brian Martorana
Oct. 1996	Michael LaSala, Robert Nicklow, Sr.
Nov. 1996	John DiBattista, Rosario Scravaglieri
Nov. 1997	Jim Huttenberger, Mark Kovacic, Ken Staley, Jerry Valenti
Oct. 1999	Harold Littlejohn
Nov. 1999	Joesph Ignagni
Dec. 1999	Walter Cihomsky, Hector Gastelum

Appendix D

GMBA Leadership

1904-1967

Year ^a	President	Vice President	Chaplain
1904	Elizabeth Cadman Davidson	George Garrett	Lawrence Dias
1910	Joseph Shettler	Amy Cherry	George Neill
1911	Nephi Fedrerer	George Neill	John Reconnu
1921 1922 1924	Fred Smith	William H. Cadman	Joseph Molinatto John Penn James Heaps Charles Ashton
1927 1928	Temen Cherry	Joseph Tucker	Anthony DiBattista
1932 1935	Henry Johnson	James Heaps Melvin Mountain	
1936 1940	Melvin Mountain	William Tucker Thomas Ross	
1943 1945 1946	Gorie Ciaravino	Nicholas Pietrangelo	Dominic Cotellesse
1948 1950 1951 1955 1956 1957 1960 1962	Dominic Thomas	Charles Curry Joseph Calabrese Frank Mazzeo Joseph Calabrese William Kunkle Isaac Smith	Alfred D'Amico Dominic Moraco Anthony Picciuto Patsy Marinetti Joseph Milantoni
1966	Isaac Smith	Joseph Milantoni	August D'Orazio

** Year first elected to office.*

GMBA Leadership

1968-2000

Year *	President	Vice President	Chaplain
1968 1969 1970	August D'Orazio	Paul Palmieri	John Bickerton Louis Checchi Joseph Milantoni
1973 1974 1976	Paul Palmieri	Donald Ross	Louis Vitto Richard Scaglione
1977	Donald Ross	Frank Morle	
1982 1983	John Griffith	Charles Jumper	Mark Kovacic Paul Ciotti
1987 1991	Paul Ciotti, Sr.	Brian Martorano	Kenneth Staley John DiBattista
1992 1993	Brian Martorano	Chuck Maddox	Doug Obradovich
1996	Kenneth Staley	Paul A. Palmieri	Isaac J. Smith
1998	Paul A. Palmieri	Jeffrey Giannetti	

* Year first elected to office.

Appendix E

General Ladies Uplift Circle Leadership

1920-2000

Year *	President	Vice President
1920	Sadie Cadman	Minnie Kennedy
1940		Elizabeth Davidson
1957	Mabel Bickerton	Ruth Akerman
1988	Arline Whitton	Lorraine DeMercurio

* Year first elected to office.

Appendix F

Branches/Missions

As of 1959

Branch/Mission		
Atlantic Coast District:		
Bronx, NY	Brooklyn, NY	Edison, NJ
Hopelawn, NJ	Metuchen, NJ	New Brunswick, NJ
West Palm Beach, FL		
California District:		
Bell, CA	Modesto, CA	San Diego, CA
San Fernando Valley, CA		
Michigan/Ontario District:		
Detroit #1, MI	Detroit #2, MI	Detroit #3, MI
Detroit #4, MI	Port Huron, MI	Windsor, Canada
Ohio:		
Cleveland, OH	Cleveland, OH	Kinsman, OH
Lockport, NY	Lorain, OH	Niles, OH
Painesville, OH	Rochester, NY	Warren, OH
Youngstown, OH		
Pennsylvania:		
Aliquippa, PA	Bitner, PA	Eagle Butte, SD
Erie, PA	Fredonia, PA	Greensburg, PA
Imperial, PA	Fayette City, PA	McKees Rocks, PA
Monongahela, PA	Glassport, PA	Roscoe, PA
St. John, KS	Vanderbilt, PA	Wakpala, SD
West Elizabeth, PA	Wichita, KS	

Appendix G

Branches/Missions

As of 2000

Branch/Mission		
Atlantic Coast Region:		
Brooklyn, NY	Bronx, NY	Cottageville, SC
Edison, NJ	Freehold, NJ	Hopelawn, NJ
Levittown, PA	Brunswick, ME	Metuchen, NJ
New Brunswick, NJ		
Southwest Region:		
Fort Worth, TX	Lakeside, AZ	Phoenix/Mesa, AZ
San Carlos, AZ	Tse Bonito, NM	
Pacific Region:		
Anaheim, CA	Bell, CA	Lindsay, CA
Modesto, CA	San Diego, CA	Simi Valley, CA
Yucaipa, CA		
Southeast Region:		
Atlanta, GA	Cape Coral, FL	Forest Hills, FL
Fort Pierce, FL	Hollywood, FL	Lake Worth, FL
Miami, FL	Mid-Georgia, GA	Quincy, FL
Tampa, FL		
Great Lakes Region:		
Detroit Branch 1, MI	Detroit Branch 2, MI	Detroit Branch 4., MI
Detroit Inner City, MI	Harrison, MI	Meaford, Ontario
Muncey, Ontario	Plumbrook, MI	Saline, MI
Saugeen, Ontario	Six Nations, Ontario	Sterling Heights, MI
Windsor, Ontario		
Ohio/Midwest Region:		
Carolina, NC	Cincinnati, OH	Cleveland, OH
Columbus, OH	Elizabethtown, OH	Erie, PA
Girard, OH	Kinsman, OH	Liberty, OH
Lockport, NY	Lorain, OH	Omaha-Bedford, NE
Painesville, OH	Rochester, NY	South Bend, IN
Youngstown, OH		

Branches/Missions

As of 2000

Branch/Mission

Penn/Mid-Atlantic Region:

Aliquippa, PA

Glassport, PA

Imperial, PA

Monongahela, PA

Spartanburg, SC

Clairton, PA

Greensburg, PA

Independence, MO

Roscoe, PA

Vanderbilt, PA

Fredonia, PA

Herndon, VA

Coraopolis, PA

St. John, KS

Appendix H

Foreign Missions

As of 2001

Mission			
WESTERN HEMISPHERE:			
Canada:			
First Missionary Trip:	1932		
Total Membership:	47	Total Missions:	3
Total Elders:	1	Total Evangelists:	0
Mexico:			
First Missionary Trip:	1959		
Total Membership:	441	Total Missions:	9
Total Elders:	16	Total Evangelists:	2
Guatemala:			
First Missionary Trip:	1987		
Total Membership:	40	Total Missions:	1
Total Elders:	1	Total Evangelists:	0
Peru:			
First Missionary Trip:	1995		
Total Membership:	21	Total Missions:	1
Total Elders:	1	Total Evangelists:	0
Venezuela:			
First Missionary Trip:	1996		
Total Membership:	7	Total Missions:	1
Total Elders:	0	Total Evangelists:	0
New Works:			
<u>Dominica</u>			
Total Membership: 5			
<u>Colombia</u>			
Total Membership: 15			

Foreign Missions

As of 2001

Mission			
EASTERN HEMISPHERE:			
Italy:			
First Missionary Trip:	1947		
Total Membership:	31	Total Missions:	3
Total Elders:	4	Total Evangelists:	2
Nigeria, West Africa:			
First Missionary Trip:	1954		
Total Membership:	3,025	Total Missions:	53
Total Elders:	71	Total Evangelists:	1
Ghana, West Africa:			
First Missionary Trip:	1976		
Total Membership:	241	Total Missions:	5
Total Elders:	8	Total Evangelists:	1
India:			
First Missionary Trip:	1981		
Total Membership:	1,725	Total Missions:	34
Total Elders:	14	Total Evangelists:	0
Kenya, East Africa:			
First Missionary Trip:	1985		
Total Membership:	502	Total Missions:	10
Total Elders:	6	Total Evangelists:	0
Philippines:			
First Missionary Trip:	2000		
Total Membership:	80	Total Missions:	5
Total Elders:	4	Total Evangelists:	0
Other Nations with Members:			
Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Poland, Nepal			

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