

## Chapter XIX

### All Dressed in White

October 26, 1947 – November 1, 1947

As Sheffield and Craig sat in the chapel waiting for priesthood meeting to start, a man who appeared to be in his early sixties and two younger men, accompanied by Henry Rowan, the district president, entered the chapel and took their seats on the stand.

Henry was the patriarch of the Rowan clan. He and his wife Rose, who was a Furness, were in their teens when the first missionaries came to Roanoke in the 1890s. The Rowans, Furenesses and Browns, who were the first three families to join the church along with the Gordons who followed soon after, formed the core of the Roanoke Branch.

Over the years others also joined the church or moved into the branch as well. It shouldn't be surprising that many of the members of the branch were related to each other in one way or another, such as the Rowans and Furenesses.

As these men took their seats, the men in the congregation wondered who they were as they whispered to each other. It was obvious that the two younger men were full time missionaries. It was common knowledge that Roger had been trying to get some for a while.

Roger stood and walked to the pulpit to begin the meeting. "Good morning, brethren." he began. "I'd like to welcome all of you this morning. As always, its a pleasure to have my father, President Henry Rowan, our District President, with us this morning. Presiding this morning is President James R. Price."

At least now everyone knew what his name was.

"Accompanying President Price are Elder Perry and Elder Commons. As of today we are now part of the newly created Central Atlantic States Mission which will be headquartered right here in Roanoke. President Price is the newly called mission president. The elders will be laboring here as well. We'll hear from President Price a little later.

"In the meantime, could I have the Brasons please stand. You all know Sheffield and his son Craig by now. They and Ramona and the girls will be baptized this Saturday."

As Sheffield and Craig sat back down, President Price smiled and nodded to them.

The meeting continued with the opening hymn and prayer. Then Roger called on President Price to introduce himself further. He had been born in Utah but had lived in Phoenix Arizona for the last thirty five years were he was in insurance and real estate. He and his wife, Mabel, were the parents of five grown children.

He indicated that he and the elders had arrived in town earlier in the week and had been setting up the mission home and office at 163 Wildhurst Avenue in the north east section of the city, about three miles from the chapel.

He said that he had great hopes for the new mission and that it looked like they were off to a good start with the pending baptisms just announced. He asked that if anyone had someone they wanted to introduce to the gospel, to feel free to contact the elders.

Following his remarks, the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic went there separate ways for their regular lessons. Afterward, Sheffield was approached by President Price who shook his hand and asked a little about him.

Before he could answer, Craig joined him and President Price greeted him as well.

Sheffield, said to Craig, "Why don't you go home and get your mom and sisters, while I talk to President Price."

After Craig left, President Price took Sheffield into a classroom and asked him to sit down. He listened with great interest as Sheffield told his story, as briefly as possible, including what brought him to the this point. Then he asked, "I'm sure you are a busy man, but would you be able to come to my home tonight? You see, I'm having my parents, my two brothers and their wives and my three brothers in law and their wives over to tell them about what we have found in our investigation of he church. Because of my late wife, they are all very interested to see what I have uncovered."

President Price paused a moment. Realizing the opportunity that had just been presented to him, he said, "I can rearrange my schedule. I'd love to come. Can I bring the elders?"

"Certainly." Sheffield said. "I've also asked Roger, I mean President Rowan, and Brother Fielding and Brother Brown, the missionaries who taught us, to be there."

After their conversation, President Price said he had some things to do but looked forward to coming to their home that evening. The timing of this new development and the arrival of the missionaries were more than coincidental. While Sheffield waited for Craig to return with the rest of the family, he realized that he had missed breakfast.

After Sunday School, they went home and had dinner and returned for Sacrament Meeting. During the meeting, the full time elders and Sister Price spoke and briefly introduced themselves. They were followed by the choir singing "O My Father". That was Ramona's first time singing with them to the congregation. President price took the remainder of the time.

After the meeting, he made it a point to talk to the Brasons. He got the directions to their home and said that he was looking forward to meeting Sheffield's family later in the evening.

That evening, the Brasons had a house full crowed into the family room and dining room. Emmett and Ellen came with Walt and Sarah. Emmaline and Willie and Sylvia and Scott also came with them. Ever since word got out that Sheffield and Ramona were investigating the church, Scott began thinking that it was

time that he returned to the ways of his youth, especially now there was a baby on the way. He saw this as the boost he needed after having wandered from church. Shenan and Emily rounded out the Brason Family.

From the Austins; Charlie and Abigale came, as did Winslow and Grace. Because of his great respect for Captain Brason, Murry and Maxine found someone to watch the kids and came with them. Ray was also there because of his relationship with Ramona. Lastly Stirling and Mary Ann came and brought Edith with them, along with Misti and Rupert. Misti and Emmaline's husbands were brothers. In all, there were eighteen people from both families there.

Sheffield took charge and thanked them all for showing an interest in what he had to tell them. He introduced the Mormons who were also there. Everyone already knew Roger and Chantelle Rowan. He introduced Hyrum Fielding, Jack Brown, President Price, and Elder Perry and Elder Commons. So there was quite a house full. After the introductions, he called on Roger to offer an invocation.

Sheffield began by reminding everyone of Geannie's search for answers after Charles Emmett died and how she pursued it until the day that she died. He reminded them of the long list of questions and insights that she had compiled. They each had a copy of them and had talked about wanting someday to find the answers themselves.

He continued by explaining how they had stumbled across what he now knew was the Mormon temple in Hawaii and how she felt it held the key to the answers that she was looking for and the thing that would connect them as a family in the eternities.

Sheffield hesitated for just a moment and decided to tell them about how Geannie had come to them one night saying that she had found what she was looking for, but that they had to find it first.

Stirling spoke up, "If anyone would come from beyond the grave, it would be our sister."

That put Sheffield at ease for having shared that experience. He went on to tell how he received the wedding announcement from Morris Gover and how things began to fall into place. He told of their trip to Utah and what they learned there and of their meetings with Brother Fielding and Brother Brown.

The feeling in the room was powerful as he concluded with his experience in the plane just the day before, minus the part about Geannie coming to him again. He concluded by bearing his testimony and telling them that he had no doubt that it was all true and for that reason he and his family were going to be baptized the following Saturday.

When he was finished, no one said a word as they each reflected on what he had just told them. Walt was the first one to say something. He rose to his feet and came and stood in front of everyone. He said, "When Sheffield first confided in me what he was doing, I must admit that I was skeptical. We had a good talk and I told him that whatever conclusion he came to, I would back him up. I must say, the story that he just related may seem incredible to believe, but knowing Geannie, it all sounds reasonable to me. She

came to me as her minister with her questions and insights, as Sheffield called them. Frankly I couldn't answer them for her. I told her that if she ever found the answers, I'd be very much interested in hearing them.

“After Geannie died, I thought about it a lot. Here I was a minister and I never could find the answers. I began to question the validity of my ministry. That's when I decided to pursue a masters degree in counseling and set up my own practice. When I eventually resigned from the ministry, everyone just assumed it was to follow a new career. The truth is, I could no longer continue leading my congregation and preaching sermons each week when I questioned the accuracy and truth of what I was teaching.

“What I have heard and more importantly felt here tonight and what Sheffield had told me here and there makes sense to me. More importantly, it rings true. As for Sarah and I and our family, we want to learn more and investigate it as Sheffield and Ramona and their family have. We invite these people,” he said pointing to the four missionaries, “into our home to teach us. I encourage all of you to do the same. Who's with me?”

There was a low buzz in the house as couples conversed between themselves in whispers. Stirling was the first to raise his hand. Having the example set for them, the rest of them unanimously consented.

President Price stepped forward and said, “In all of my varied experiences in the church, I have witnessed countless miracles. What I have witnessed here tonight is just one more. When I accepted this call, I was promised that field would be ripe. I wondered why Roanoke was selected as the mission headquarters when there are larger and more centrally located cities. I just assumed it was because of the larger concentration of members of the church in this region. I had no idea that it was because the Lord had been preparing the hearts of so many through a very inspired and elect lady, such as Geannie. I wish I could of known her. She sounds like she was an amazing woman.

“What we have here tonight is not unlike the time just over fifty years ago when the Rowans, Furnesses, Browns, and others had their hearts prepared. I promise you that we were sent here at this time to teach you the things you seek. As Brother Brason has said, 'All of those questions can be addressed.' and we have the answers. We're not here to take away what you already have. I can see that you have so much light and truth already. We offer what you seek, by adding to what you already have and clearing up some of the things that might not be quite correct. I appreciate what Walt had to say about that.

“Now that we are here, the elders and these good brethren are here to teach you. I would recommend that each family go at their own pace according to your needs because you will all progress differently. I understand the you have grown children and grandchildren who live in the area. I would encourage you to invite them to join with you in these cottage meetings.

“I also invite you to begin attending our church meetings, as Sheffield and his family have been

doing. I know that President Rowan would love to have you and will be happy to accommodate you.”

President Price went on to bear a powerful testimony of the restored gospel and its truthfulness. At the conclusion his remarks, Sheffield again stood and said, “Thank you for coming to listen to to what I had to say and I hope you are serious as you investigate this for yourselves as we have done. I hope you all come to our baptism this Saturday. Now what would a family get together be without treats. Ramona and the girls have been busy baking cookies. But first I'd like to invite my father to offer a benediction and a blessing.

While enjoying the refreshments, President Price, the missionaries, and the Rowans mingled with the Brasons and the Austins, visiting and answered some questions and concerns. Before leaving, each of the five families had scheduled a cottage meeting in their homes during the week. Emmett and Ellen agreed to join Walt and Sarah and their family the very next evening when Elder Perry and Jack Brown came to meet with them.

After everyone had left and they got ready for bed, Sheffield commented to Ramona how pleased he was that the evening went well. She was little surprised that he had mentioned that they had actually seen Geanie, but as it turned out, it lent validity to his story.

The next morning, after the kids left for school, Sheffield arranged for two airline tickets for Morris and Shelia. They would arrive Saturday afternoon at five and would leave to fly home at eight o'clock Monday morning.

When Sheffield got to school he turned his attention to his government class and the lesson plan for the day. During lunch, he met with Bryon Capps, the psychology teacher and discussed his the dilemma that he perceived lead to his team's loss to Armstrong High School. Mr. Capps was more than willing to put something together and told him he'd get back to him when he was ready. He had a couple of ideas and assured him that it would be before the end of the week.

During wrestling practice, he sat down with the team and Coach Karrington to discuss what went wrong. Several of them admitted that they felt intimidated. For one, they were from a big school in a big city. Showing up in a black bus unnerved some of them. There were other issues as well. He had pretty much been correct in his assumption. It was a psychological defeat. He didn't want to dwell on it and make things worse than they were. He told them that he was putting it behind him and encouraged them to do the same.

That evening Sheffield got a call from Walt. Their cottage meeting had gone very well and they were impressed with what they were taught. He said that they had everyone was there except for Tim and Curtis, who were away at school but that he wanted to encourage them to contact the missionaries.

During the week Norma, Craig, and Edith attended a Mutual Halloween social, complete with costumes, at the church. That put everyone in the mood for Halloween. They had some big pumpkins out in

the garden that they carved on Wednesday evening. Ramona had invited Ellen, Sarah and Sylvia to attend Relief Society with her on Thursday. They went and had an enjoyable time. Sylvia's mother in law, Eve Rowan, was there with them as well. Everyone had been warm and welcoming to them, just as they had been to Ramona a couple of months earlier.

During wrestling practice on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Capps gave the boys on the team some good counsel about not being intimidated and self esteem. He did it in such away as build them up and used some role playing to give them some practical experience. The lesson went so well, that Sheffield asked him to come and spend one hour with them each week. He agreed.

That evening, Brother Furness and Elder Perry came for their cottage meeting. They discussed the baptismal service and what to expect, even demonstrating how it was done. They asked each one who they wanted to perform their respective ordinances. Sheffield and Ramona both said that Morris would baptize them. Sheffield wanted Jack to perform the confirmation and Ramona asked Hyrum. As for the kids, they all wanted Roger Rowan to baptize them. Craig wanted Roger to also confirm him, but both Norma and Janet wanted James Furness to confirm them; Norma because he was her Sunday School teacher and Janet because he was Olivia's father.

Elder Perry was the supervising elder over all of the missionaries in the Virginia West District and therefore was authorized to interview baptismal candidates. He began with Janet, Norma, and Craig. He asked them questions that determined their understanding, commitment and worthiness. Each of them were found ready.

Next he talked to Ramona. He asked her the same type of questions but on a more adult level. He talked to her about her worthiness and asked some probing questions. In regard to the Word of Wisdom, she said that she used the smoke and drank on occasion but gave them up years ago. As far as coffee, she explained that she hadn't had any in two months.

When he asked her about moral chasteness, she admitted that many, many years ago she had had sexual relations outside of wedlock. She told of how she knew that it was wrong and lived with a guilty conscience for years. Then Geannie had explained to her that she needed to confess her sins to God and asked for forgiveness. She told Elder Perry that she did and that she felt that the burden had been lifted.

Elder Perry said, "I commend you for your honesty. As you were taught by Brother Fielding and Brother Brown, recognizing your sins and feeling remorseful are the first steps, confessing them to God is another. Certain serious sins require confession to the Lord's authorized servant is another, which you just did even though you had been forgiven years ago. The final step," he explained, "is baptism. By being baptized, repentance is complete and we are washed clean through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Then

ever after, partaking of the sacrament keeps us clean as we continue to repent and improve. Sister Brason," he said, "I find you worthy and ready in every way to be baptized."

Finally he talked to Sheffield in the same manner. Sheffield had never smoked or drank in his life and abhorred such. He did say that he only gave up coffee after he began meeting with the missionaries. He was proud to say that he always lived a moral life and how such things had never been a temptation, even when faced with them as he had been with Paul Drusell. When he was done, Elder Perry commended him for living his life in the way that he had, even during all of the years of his military career where such things are considered normal.

While Elder Perry was conducting the interviews, Brother Fielding filled out the recommend forms with all of the pertinent information. At the conclusion of all of the interviews, Elder Perry signed them.

On Halloween, Craig took Edith to a school dance and Norma attended a party at the junior high, while Janet went trick or treating with Olivia Furness in their neighborhood in town. Sheffield and Ramona stayed home to greet what few trick or treaters that stopped by.

On Saturday morning Sheffield loaded Janet's bicycle into the pickup and took her to play with Olivia for the day. After dropping her off, he went back home to tackle some chores. Ramona and Norma were fixing lunch when the telephone rang. Ramona wiped her hands on her apron before answering.

"Sister Brason," the frantic voice of a boy on the other end of the line said, "this is Jerry Furness." Jerry was Olivia's thirteen year old brother.

Ramona's heart sank. "Whats wrong, Jerry?"

"Janet was just hit by a car!"

"What?" Now Ramona was frantic.

"Janet just got hit by a car. My mom is with her and the ambulance is coming."

Stunned, all Ramona said was, "I'll be right there." and hung up.

Even more frantic, Ramona called for Sheffield as she grabbed her purse and headed for the garage. Craig had her car on the tire ramps, changing the oil for her. With frustration added to panic, she called for Sheffield again.

He was out in the barn grooming Roxie and heard her panicked cry. He put down the curry brush and dashed for the house. When he got to the garage he could see that she was in tears and trembling.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Janet's been hit by a car! They are waiting for an ambulance."

"Get in." Sheffield said pointing to his car.

They hopped in and he started it and backed out of the garage and pulled onto the highway and

speed away. All Craig and Norma heard was that Janet had been hit, they got into their car and followed.

As Sheffield and Ramona hurried into Roanoke, they went straight to the Furness' home not knowing if she would be there or which hospital she would be taken too. As they pulled onto the street, they saw the ambulance. They pulled up in front of the Furness home, behind the police car that was at the scene of the accident and jumped out of the car without shutting the doors.

They approached the officer who was talking to Wendy Furness, Olivia's mother. "Wendy said to the officer, "Here are her parents."

"Where's my daughter?" Ramona asked.

"They just loaded her into the ambulance." Wendy said.

Ramona made her way to the back of the ambulance. "That's my daughter." she announced to the attendants. "I want to see my daughter." She climbed into the back of the ambulance without waiting for a response.

Janet was lying on a stretcher with a splint on her leg and a bandage around her head. "Oh Janet, I was so worried. Are you alright."

Janet looked up, her freckled face all scratched up, and attempted a smile. "I'm alright, Mom."

"What happened?"

"I broke my leg. Please don't be mad at me."

"Oh honey, I'm not mad. Are you sure you're alright?"

She nodded her head.

Ramona turned to the ambulance attendant and asked, "What's her condition?"

He explained that Janet had broken her left femur and had some cuts and scratches on her head and face and a gash on her left hand. He then said, "We're just about ready to take her to Lewis Gale, would you like to ride with your daughter?"

"Yes. I would. But first I need to find out what happened."

She turned to Janet, "I'll be right back. Don't go anywhere."

Ramona returned to Sheffield who had been talking to the police officer. Craig and Norma were at his side.

"How is she?" Sheffield asked.

"She'll be alright. She has a broken leg and some cuts and lacerations. What happened?"

Between Olivia and the driver of the car, they learned what had happened. Janet and Olivia were riding their bikes back from the nearby Melrose Elementary School where they had gone to play on the playground. Olivia was in front and Janet was right behind her. A car was coming up behind them and had slowed down to go around them. All of a sudden a dog darted out into the street. Olivia swerved to miss it

and that is when Janet ran into the back of Olivia's bike, throwing her off her bike and into the side of the car.

The driver of the car, Angela Heraldson, was a neighbor of the Furness's who lived a few houses down the street. She explained that the girls were well off to the side of the street as she passed, but the oncoming lane was blocked by the delivery truck. She slowed way down as she went around and that's when she saw the dog run out and knock the girls off their bikes. She heard a thud against the side of her car and stopped and got out to see what had happened.

Wendy Furness explained that she had gone out to the mail box and saw the girls coming and was walking back up to the house when she heard the commotion and looked up to see the car stopped and girls bikes tipped over in the street. She saw Olivia standing next to Mrs. Heraldson who was bent over. Wendy ran to see what had happened and that's when she saw Janet on the ground. She was conscious and crying. Another neighbor looked out of her window after it happened to see what all of the excitement was about. She was the one who phoned in the emergency.

Once what had happened had been explained, Ramona returned to Janet and got in the back of the ambulance for the ride to the hospital and Sheffield followed. Craig picked up Janet's bent up bicycle and put it into the back seat of his car, which had the top down, and he and Norma went back home.

Once at the hospital, Ramona explained that she was a nurse and insisted that she remain at her daughter's side. Sheffield on the other hand was directed to the administration office to take care of the paper work. When he returned he was asked to have a seat in the waiting area.

The doctor first attended to the cuts and scratches on Janet's forehead. They weren't serious and only required minor dressing. The cut on the back of her hand needed two stitches and a bandage. The jacket she was wearing proctored her arms and upper torso from further injury.

After the x-ray had come back, the splint was removed and Ramona held her while the doctor set her leg. Janet had been brave throughout the whole procedure, but that caused her to cry. He then put her leg in a cast that went from her foot, with only her toes poking out, clear up to her hip.

With the cast in place, Sheffield was invited into the examination room. The doctor handed her a pair of crutches and showed her how to use them. After walking around the room with them, she sat back down on the examination table. The doctor explained that it was a clean break and that it should heal in six to eight weeks. He explained that she had to be very careful not to get the cast wet.

Janet's countenance fell, "Does that mean I can't be baptized tonight?"

"If it means getting your cast wet, I'm afraid the answer is no." the doctor kindly explained.

It was mid afternoon when they left the hospital. They loaded Janet and her crutches into the back seat in such a way that her leg could stretch out over the seat. Sheffield told her that he once had a cast on

his leg and couldn't even get out of bed. "Your mom took such good care of me." he said. "She's a real angel and she'll take good care of you too."

All of the clamor had set them behind in getting ready for their important evening. Sheffield had to pick up Morris and Shelia at five and Ramona needed to have dinner ready so they could be at the meetinghouse by seven for the baptism service at seven thirty. When they got home, everyone pitched in to help.

Sheffield slipped away and drove to the airport to pick up Morris and Shelia. When they got off the plane, he was surprised to see Wayne and Gale with them. It was a last minute decision on their part and they didn't have a chance to warn the Brasons that they were coming. So as not to be an inconvenience, they planned on staying at a hotel. Sheffield wouldn't hear it and insisted that they stay with them.

Ramona was surprised to see them come in the house and after a round of hugs, she set two more places at the table. Wayne explained that he couldn't resist coming because he hadn't been back since he had been there as a missionary twenty five years earlier.

After dinner, it was a bit of a rush to get ready. Sheffield was frustrated by the fact that they were running late. Ramona loaned the Govers her car and they followed the Brasons to the meetinghouse. Although it was five minutes after seven, there was plenty of time to get ready.

Roger and Chantelle were there waiting for them and were surprised to see Janet show up in a cast. Naturally they wanted to know what happened. Ramona explained the events that resulted in the cast. They were just glad that it wasn't more serious. Of course it meant that there would be one fewer baptism that night.

They took them downstairs to the clothing closet next to the Relief Society room and Chantelle went through the closet finding white clothes of the appropriate sizes. Trousers and shirts for Sheffield and Craig and Roger, Morris, and Jim Furnness who were performing the baptisms. White dresses were provided for Ramona and Norma. In the rush, Ramona managed to remember the change of underwear that they had been instructed to bring.

With their clothes in hand, they were directed to the dressing rooms on either side of the rear of the building. Chantelle and Gail joined Ramona and Norma to be of assistance. While they were changing, the Relief Society room began to fill with people who came to show their support. Extra chairs had to be brought in from other classrooms. As the branch members gathered, some of them had heard about Janet's accident earlier that day as word had spread. Others had no idea. Everyone made a big fuss over her and was glad that she wasn't hurt worse than what she was.

When Emmett and Ellen got there, they were surprised to see their youngest granddaughter in a cast. There hadn't been time to call them and tell them about it. Again the story was repeated for their

benefit.

All of those who had been at the cottage meeting on Sunday night were also there, including Tim and Curtis who were home for the weekend. Each family had meet with the missionaries for the first time during the week.

As people came in Wayne looked them over to see if he saw anyone that he remembered. Then he say Henry and Rose Rowan and recognized them. He approached them and asked if they remembered him. He wasn't surprised that they didn't. He then explained who he was and that he had been a missionary there back in 1922. After talking to him for a minute or two, they were able to place him.

Sophia Brown recognized him immediately and wondered what his connection to the Brasons was; as did Cornelius and Rose Mary Furness. But the best reunion of all was when Wendell and Marilyn Butler came in. He had taught and baptized them and their children. He was thrilled to see that they and their daughter, Wendy Furness had remained committed all of those years, but was saddened to learn that their sons, Marlin and Neil had not.

Sheffield pulled Jack and Wayne aside and asked Jack if he minded if he had Wayne confirm instead, since he came all that way. Naturally he was fine with it.

Once the Brasons, all dressed in white, were brought into Relief Society Room and were ushered to the seats reserved for them on the front row, where Janet was waiting for them. She was disappointed that she couldn't join them. Once they were seated, the folding door at the front of the room was opened, revealing the font, which had been filled with water earlier in the afternoon.

All the while, Rose Mary Furness softly played various hymns on the piano. When President Rowan was ready to begin the service, he stepped to the front and she stopped playing. He began by welcoming everyone that had come to show their love and support for the Brasons. He particularly welcomed members of the Brason and Austin families as well as the Govers who had come all the way from Utah to be with them.

After singing "Come Follow Me" and an invocation, Hyrum Fielding talked about how baptism is not only symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also the death of the old man and the spiritual rebirth of a new man who has taken the name of Christ. He explained that at baptism we make a covenant with God that we are willing to keep His commandments from that time forward. He taught from the Book of Mormon that at baptism, we covenant to stand as witnesses of God and His kingdom at all times and in all things, and in all places. He also emphasized the commitment to mourn with those that mourn and comfort those in need of comfort.

At the conclusion of his remarks, Sheffield and Morris were invited to come forward and the family members were also asked to come forward so they could witness the baptism. Unseen to any human eyes,

Geannie, Sandy, Austin, and Charles Emmett also watched.

As Sheffield and Morris stepped down into the waist deep, less than lukewarm water, Elder Perry and Elder Commons each stood at either end as witnesses that the baptism was performed properly.

Once in the water. Morris raised his right hand to the square and with his left hand, took Sheffield by the right wrist. With his left hand, Sheffield took Morris by his left wrist. In a clear and distinct voice, Morris then said, "Sheffield Brason, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." He then placed his right hand behind Sheffield's back and lowered him to the water, completely immersing him and raised him back up.

As he came up out of the water, Sheffield again felt a burning in his bosom, reaffirming that he had indeed made the right choice. It didn't matter that he didn't know and understand everything; he understood enough and knew that it was all true.

Geannie, who had watched from her vantage point, was very pleased and satisfied, knowing that it wouldn't be long now and she could have it too.

Morris looked at the elders who nodded their heads indicating that it had been done properly. Still standing in the water, the one time captain and later rear admiral embraced the one time petty officer and later lieutenant junior grade who had served him so faithfully for so long and who had just performed the greatest service possible.

As Sheffield came up out of the font, he was handed a towel and stood at the edge of while Ramona stepped down into the font. In the same manner, Morris baptized her. When she came up out of the water, tears of pure joy streamed down her face as she held Morris tightly in an embrace of appreciation. Again, the elders nodded their approval. Ramona stepped up out of the font at the other end where she too had been handed a towel. Morris likewise left the font and joined Sheffield.

Next Roger and Craig entered the font and Craig was baptized. They joined Sheffield and Morris while Norma took his place in the font with Brother Furness. When she came up out of the water, Elder Perry said, "You'll have to do it again, her big toe came out of the water."

Indeed her right foot slipped out from under her and her foot came up as he laid her under the water. The ordinance was repeated and this time, both elders nodded that it had been done correctly. When they came up out of the font Ramona and Norma went into the women's dressing room, where Chantelle and Gail again joined them, while the others went into the men's room.

The folding curtain was closed and while they dried off and changed their cloths, the guests waited for them while soft hymns were played on the piano. A sweet spirit prevailed in the room while everyone contemplated what they had just witnessed. Walt particularly pondered the occasion and concluded that was probably only of the first of several to come.

Sheffield, Craig, Morris, Roger, and Jim were the first to return to the return to the Relief Society Room. It took Ramona and Norma just a little longer while Ramona helped Norma with her long hair. Once they returned, the service continued with Brother Brown talking about who the Holy Ghost was and the significance of his role in the Godhead. Following his remarks, the four of them were confirmed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Each of them received a personal blessing as part of being confirmed. As for Janet, she was not left out as Roger gave her a blessing too and promised her that her broken leg would heal quickly and her turn would come as soon as she got her cast taken off.

A closing hymn and a benediction concluded the service. The members of the branch rallied around the newest members of the church, congratulating them and welcoming them into their fold. The members of the Brason and Austin families expressed their appreciation for having been included in this import event in Sheffield's family. They each went away with a greater desire to investigate it more fully for themselves.

When they returned home later in the evening, Ramona brought out the sheet cake that she was glad that she had made the day before since of the unexpected events earlier in the day, and some ice cream that she got just for the occasion. They had invited the family and all of those who had participated in the service to join them. After everyone left they had to find a place for their guests. Wayne and Gale were put up in the guest room and Craig slept on the couch since he surrendered his room to Morris and Sheila.

When Sheffield and Ramona went to bed, the Spirit stayed with them as they now had the gift of the Holy Ghost as their constant companion.

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The Central Atlantic States Mission was created on October 26, 1947 with James Robert Price of Phoenix , Arizona as the mission president. The mission home was located at 163 Wildhurst Avenue NE, Roanoke Virginia.

The story of Ramona telling Geannie about her “meaningless encounters” is found in Remembering Geanine, Part III, Chapter XXXIX. She told Sheffield about receiving forgiveness in The Business of War Part III, Charter XXXIII.

