

LOVE FOR OHANA HELPS BRING THE TEMPLE

by Dorothy L. Behling

The president of the Hawaii Temple between 1955 and 1959 was Ray Dillman. His wife, Mildred, offered herself as a friend to the youth of Laie. As a young Mia Maid, I appreciated her warmth and generosity, admired her testimony and loved her for taking the time to notice us. After my graduation in June 1960 from what was then the Church College of Hawaii, I went to Utah and called at her home in Salt Lake. She invited me to spend some time with her before proceeding to BYU Provo to continue my education. It was on that occasion that she told me this story:

Shortly after Ray and Mildred were married, he was called to be a bishop. He served in that capacity for many years and one of his counselors became his closest friend. The wives were friendly, but, the two men were like brothers. When Bishop Dillman was called to be the stake president, he asked his friend to be his counselor and again it was a harmonious and spiritually satisfying arrangement.

Then, one day this friend was told by his company that he would have to move to one of their out of state offices. The friend was shocked. Surely, the Lord wanted him to stay in Utah and remain in the presidency of the stake -- with his good friend. He would have to quit his job! It seemed the only obvious choice. He prayed about resigning from the company, and was surprised to be given the impression that he should NOT quit. Instead, he should move as they required. He was disappointed as he announced his leaving to the stake presidency. In sadness and wonder his family left their home of so many years, and their friends, the Dillmans.

Within a very short time, Ray and Mildred were called to the Northwest Indian Mission with headquarters, I believe, in Seattle. Soon after President Dillman and his family arrived, he called his long-time friend, whom the Lord had conveniently moved into the mission area, to be his counselor. As it happened, when the Dillman's mission was over, the friend's company required him to return to Utah. This he did gladly. Theirs must have been a David and Jonathan friendship.

Mildred said that the only time these friends had been apart was when the Dillmans were here as the president and matron of the Hawaii Temple. Upon their release from the temple, the Dillmans returned to Salt Lake and he was invited to join the bevy of lawyers for the Church in the general offices. Though in seemingly good health, President Ray Dillman died within a few months of that appointment. At the funeral, the wife of Ray's best friend came to Mildred and while bending close to Mildred's ear she whispered hoarsely, "Darn your husband, anyhow!"

Mildred was shocked. Why would anyone say such a thing and make no explanation? Later, when it was opportune, Mildred managed to get the wife of her husband's friend in a quiet place alone and asked for an explanation of the woman's strange behavior.

There had been a dream. President Dillman had been seen in front of a

large congregation of men who were wearing a variety of military uniforms. He was sitting on a dais and beside him there was an empty chair. He beckoned from the dais toward the chair. Both the life-long friend and his wife knew that here again was another call. The wife didn't want her husband to go to a mission from which he would not return. She was trying to accept everything that had happened, but, she still felt, "Darn your husband, anyhow!"

Preparations were made for the family and a short time later, when all was ready, the friends, who were seldom separated in life, were reunited in the steady work of the gospel in the spirit world.

A HAWAIIAN PARALLEL

There were some things that happened here in Hawaii which, I believe, strongly resemble this experience of the Dillman family. The parallel events revolve around a young lawyer, a terrible plague, and a feeling of ohana.¹ Together they may help give us additional insights as to why the temple was placed in this land.

It was 1853 in Honolulu. A vital young Hawaiian lawyer, John W. Kahumoku,² recently converted to the Church accepted the call to serve as a traveling companion to the full-time missionaries from Salt Lake. His knowledge of the language was critical to their potential success. His story can be found in the unpublished manuscript which includes compiled transcriptions of early handwritten missionary journals, copies of newspaper articles, etc. It is entitled The History of the Hawaiian Mission by the church historian Andrew Jensen.³

The work having gained a strong footing on the island of Oahu and Maui, it was considered best by the American Elders to renew their efforts on the two other large islands of the group, namely Hawaii and Kauai, where their attempts of introducing the gospel hitherto had been unsuccessful. Consequently, Elders Nathan Tanner, Thomas Karren and John W. Kahumoku sailed from Honolulu, June 1, 1853, on a mission to Hawaii, of which Elder Tanner gives the following interesting account:

"After four days of rough seas and sea sickness, we landed at Lahaina, Maui, and spent the day with Elder Francis A. Hammond. In the evening we went on board again and after two days more of heavy seas and rough sailing, we landed at Kawaihae, on the island of Hawaii. From Kawaihae we had intended to make the trip overland but on account of the distance and high streams we concluded to go by water and so went on board the schooner again to resume our voyage, . . .

The sea remained rough, so rough that several unsuccessful attempts were made to reach Hilo; but though we thrice reached a point opposite that place, we were unable to land, and were finally driven back to Kohala. By this time the sails were torn so badly and the rigging so disabled that the captain told us it was impossible to land us at Hilo and asked us what he should do. We were sick, it seemed neigh unto death, and

were willing to land anywhere, rather than suffer the horrors incident to the extreme situation any longer; and so we told him to run with the wind and land us wherever he could. He then turned and ran back with the wind to Kohala, where we landed; and it soon became apparent to us that it was at Kohala, and not at Hilo, that the Lord wanted us to labor; for we found the people there ready and waiting and praying for the Elders to come. We landed on the 10th and although we were sick the natives insisted upon hearing us, and according to their desires we held a meeting and Elder Kahumoku addressed them for an hour and a half. The next morning we baptized 25 before we ate our breakfast.

On the 15th (June) we organized two branches of the church, one with 34 and another with 16 members; among them was the chief Napa, whom we ordained a priest. (Jensen, vol. 1)

The local Calvinist minister, Elias Bond, began to fear for the loss of his flock. He caused problems for the missionaries and saints in Kohala which continued for several years. The irony is that because of the records he kept in his church, not only was I able to find the marriage of my great-grandmother, Pukaua(-nuiokeamehameha), to my great-grandfather, (Samuel William Kekahi(-) Moku, but also, that very church record is presently being extracted by the Mililani Stake and the entire congregation, the one Mr. Bond fought so mightily to preserve from the LDS missionaries, will soon be Mormons through proxy temple ordinances! Anyway, very soon after the arrival of this small company of LDS missionaries formidable powers were exerted against them.

On the 27th of June, we were arrested by the sheriff on a warrant which did not state the charge against us; nor had it any date; [Either ellipse would have made any subpoena invalid, of course.] . . . but we were required to appear forthwith and we did so. Upon inquiring after the nature of the charge the judge told us we would learn later, that he did not yet know the charge, but someone had told him that we had been interfering with the schools. . . . that the Mormons had said that the Mormon children need not pack boards on their backs six or eight miles with which to build a church for some other denomination, that God had not made them for pack mules, etc. It was shown at the trial that one day in each week and the mornings and evenings of the rest, the scholars were subject to be set at work under the supervision of the Teachers for the Priest; that the word of the priest was law to them, and that they were in the habit of carrying lumber and sand six or eight miles with which to build a church, while the priest had plenty of cattle running upon the range.

Elder John W. Kahumoku had been educated for a lawyer and had had some years of practice and he pled our case before the court. He showed that under the law we as priests had the same right to organize schools as any

other priests, that it only required 15 pupils to give us the right of requiring the government to build us a school house; that we had 19 of the 25 scholars in the school in question and were therefore masters of the situation and entitled to the children, school house and all. There were probably five hundred spectators and they were deeply interested in the proceedings. Some of them suggested that if the Mormon children contributed toward the erection of the Calvinists church we should own it together. The case was adjourned until Friday at 10 a.m. when we were fined \$1 for interfering with the schools and the judge decided that the children should help build the Calvinist meeting house; but we baptized the school teacher, ordained him a Priest, took charge of the school house and he taught during school days and went out to preach on Saturdays and Sundays for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The people were well pleased with him as teacher and preacher. . . .

The King [Kamehameha III, Kauikeaouli] had ordered a fast on account of the sickness (smallpox) to be held on the 14th of June, throughout the kingdom, but had directed that any who did not get the notice in time might hold it at anytime afterwards. We did not get the notice in time for the 14th of June, and therefore we held it on Thursday July 7th, which was our regular fast day, the first Thursday in the Month. The children who attended our fast meeting on that day were fined and put into the stocks for being absent from school on that day. The chief justice subsequently wrote to the local judges that there was no authority of law for the proceeding, but the children had paid the fine and that ended the matter. June 10th [more correctly July] Elder Kahumoku returned from a missionary trip, during which he had baptized ten, and upon his arrival was summoned to come before the court for breaking the Sabbath by rowing his canoe. He had started home on Saturday night, but owing to head winds, did not arrive until Sunday after daylight and so it was claimed that he had violated the sacredness of the Sabbath. If he had been charged with breaking the priest's heart by the inroads made into his flock it would have been nearer the truth. The constable had no summons with him and so we told him we could not recognize his authority. We said also that we thought we had a right to fill Sunday appointments for preaching, even if we were compelled to go in a canoe. On the 13th the constable came with a summons charging Bro. Kahumoku with the offence already mentioned and on the following Friday he appeared for trial. (Jensen, vol. 1)

After Elder Kahumoku explained the situation to the judge
the court asked him if he was not loaded [probably with

goods for trade or sale]. He replied no, but that he like the Savior, had "Not where to lay his head; that he had no one to feed him except such friends as he made in his ministry and that some persons had given him a calabash of fish and one of poi which constituted all the load he had. The court asked him if the king had allowed him to preach; he replied that his right to preach was as good as that of any minister and his authority to administer in the ordinances was from heaven; that if the king or any other minister was ever saved in the kingdom of God, it would be by virtue of that authority that he held; that the whole world would have to submit to it or be damned. He was discharged. (Jensen, vol. 1)

Elder Nathan Tanner continues the story:

On the 27th of July 1853, our friend and Brother, Elder John W. Kahumoku died. He was a native only 26 years old, but was learned and a fearless, fluent and forcible advocate of the Gospel, a faithful, Godly man, a son of my begetting in the Gospel at Burgess Hall in Honolulu. He devoted his whole life after his baptism, to the study and propagation of the cause of Christ, only laying down his Bible when within about 24 hours of his demise his physical strength would no longer sustain him to hold it. He had been out to fill an appointment by himself, had baptized some and on returning had rode hard on horse-back to within a mile of home, which distance had had walked rapidly in order to avoid a rain storm. This caused him to perspire freely and he caught cold. A high fever ensued, and although fasting and prayers were constantly offered for him and all that our affection and skill could suggest was done his summons was imperative and he passed peacefully away. We buried him in a stone sepulchre with a stone rolled up to the entrance about 25 rods from the sea and the same distance from the bluffs, July 28, 1853, in Honokane, on the island of Hawaii. (qtd. in Jensen, vol. 1)

Of this incident, Elder Thomas Karren wrote:

Myself and Bro. Tanner cried unto the Lord in his behalf. But all has failed, everything was Dark, . . . it appears that he [Kahumoku] had a Special Calling to go to the world of Spirits to preach to his people there, he is the first of his nation that is gone into the Spirit world with the priesthood upon him; he was faithful to his Calling, and did not shun to declare the Gospel of the Lord God as far as he knew how, his labors were unwavering by night and day, a more faithful young man I never knew, his character was unpeachable [unimpeachable]. It may be said of him he left all and followed Christ, he gave himself wholly to the ministry.

It was his joy and delight his meat and drink to win souls into the Kingdom of God; . . . he had finished his work here and is called to act in another sphere . . . he has laid down his life in the field like a Soldier of Christ and his works will follow him; he has laid the foundation of a work that will stand to the winding up scene and his name will be held in honorable remembrance among his people and among the Saints of God. (Karren 75-79)

The Hawaiian Mission History continues:

His loss was very keenly felt by Elders Tanner and Karren as he had acted as their interpreter and they were left upon the island of Hawaii almost unable to make themselves understood by the natives. (Jensen, vol. 1)

Elder Kahumoku, like President Dillman, answered a call to the spirit world. He was the first in perhaps centuries to enter that world with the language and skill to teach his people with priesthood power. The ancient reverence for the extended family, the Ohana, had caused the Hawaiian people to expend tremendous energy in preserving a detailed memory of generations. Perhaps, Elder Kahumoku, like President Dillman, even called others to help him and that many Hawaiian saints, in an act of love unparalleled in the history of the Church in any era, left this life to help with the work among the dead.

THE HAWAII OF 1853 - A TIME OF DESTRUCTION

It is important to appreciate the milieu in which all this happened. The first LDS missionaries had arrived in Honolulu December 12, 1850. Prior to their arrival there had been great losses among the Hawaiian people. The population in 1778 is estimated at 300,000. At the time of the 1850 census there were 84,165 people in the islands. By 1853, the official numbers had dropped to 73,130 persons: 70,036 native Hawaiians, 983 part Hawaiian, and 2,119 non-Hawaiians. (Schmitt 70, 74). The later losses were attributed to the contact with the western world. The normally high birth rate could not keep pace with the deaths and there was a deficit of over 11,000 lives in those three short years.

Many western diseases found their way to Hawaii; measles, influenza, cholera, various fevers, even the common cold. The Hawaiians had little resistance to these imports. Combined with the social diseases generally brought by the sailors, it becomes quickly apparent why the population dwindled so rapidly. Earlier excerpts from the Hawaiian Mission history mentioned the terrible smallpox epidemic of 1853. You may recall recent accounts, within the last two years, of the unearthing of a common grave in Honolulu around the King Street area where the bodies of several victims of this disaster were discovered. In his history, Shoal of Time, Gavan Daws gives a vivid description of the epidemic's destructive power.

The physicians of Honolulu worked as fast as they could to get vaccine matter ready, and the drugstores were besieged by people asking for vaccination, but the

disease spread as if nothing were being done. Soon almost every district of Honolulu was reporting cases. A day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer was called for June 15. [Date discrepancy between this and the missionary account.] Protestant ministers set up vaccination and food stations. Catholic priests tended the sick and baptized the dying, and some newly arrived Mormon elders labored to expel the disease by laying on hands and anointing with oil. By June 18, 41 natives were dead and 114 were sick; in the next week the figures doubled. July and August were terrible months. On Oahu more than four thousand cases and fifteen hundred deaths were reported, most of them at Honolulu. By October the town was safe, but the rural districts of Oahu continued to suffer. . . .

By the end of January 1854, when for the first time no new cases or deaths were recorded, the islands had reported a total of 6,405 cases and 2,485 deaths. Richard Armstrong, who was in charge of the kingdom's census, thought these figures were far too low. He believed that for every death the government heard about, two or three went unreported. In his opinion the toll was probably as high as five or six thousand. Only a handful of white men were among that number, even though everybody was exposed to the disease. The Hawaiians had never given much attention to Western ideas about medical treatment, and in this instance they paid a terrible price. At Honolulu many natives were vaccinated or inoculated, and if they were lucky the vaccine took. Thousands of others refused to be helped. Some scratched their arms, simulating vaccination marks, rather than submit to the white physicians and their volunteer helpers. Others went to native medical kahunas for aid. The dreadful consequences were plain. Hawaiians fell sick everywhere. Some were abandoned and died alone; their bodies were left to rot. Others were buried where they lay, without coffins, in graves so shallow that wandering pigs and dogs could unearth them. Some native families nursed their sick at home, devotedly and uselessly, and carefully laid the dead under the dirt floors of their thatch huts or in their house yards, following their old burial practices and condemning themselves to follow the dead into the grave.

At Honolulu life fell apart. The produce markets emptied out; fresh beef could not be found anywhere; no one trusted pork or chicken from native farms; and fish and vegetables were served only with great trepidation. Workers and domestic servants disappeared. Hawaiians left the town by hundreds, the healthy to get away from the loathsome disease, the sick to escape they knew not what. They went into the hills and the country districts to wait out their time -- and to spread infection without knowing it -- or they took to boats

and canoes in defiance of the Health Commissioners' orders and headed for the outer islands.

For those who stayed at Honolulu death was all around. Yellow flags hung in doorways on every street, and the legal columns of the Polynesian were filled to overflowing with attorneys' announcements winding up the estates of Hawaiians who had committed their property but not their person to Western ways, who had bought title to their lands and made their wills but had not been vaccinated. Teams of wagon drivers patrolled the town, picking up the sick and the dead. Among these workers were six seamen jailed after the riot of 1852. They and their fellow wagoners became so hardened to death that they were able to stop at a tavern for a drink, leaving their load of corpses outside. . . . At the height of the epidemic forty or fifty bodies were buried each day at Kakaako, and before the worst was over more than a thousand corpses were packed into the ground there, many of them laid on their sides to save space, in graves just wide enough to admit a body and only three feet deep.

It was a terrible time, . . . (Daws 140-141)

It should be remembered that during this time there were only temporary hospitals and dispensaries for the Hawaiian population. Queen Emma would soon begin the campaign that would culminate six years later, in August of 1859, with the construction of Queen's Hospital.

The Deseret News in Salt Lake City, carried a story dated June 30, 1853, sent by Philip B. Lewis, the president of the Hawaii Mission, which described the situation from his point of view:

Bros. Johnson, Farrar and myself, have been occupied almost entirely for the last ten days, striving to alleviate the sufferings of scores of these poor natives, who are now being swept off by hundreds by that loathsome disease the smallpox, which made its appearance here some four weeks since. Such scenes of wretchedness and misery, my eyes never before beheld. We have sought diligently to administer to the brethren through the power of our priesthood, and our administration has almost universally been blessed to those who have taken our council. . . .

The condition of many places is truly heart-rending. One which we were called to visit, contained 16 who were suffering with the disease, and the mats or floor was nearly covered with seemingly living putrance. From our success in teaching and administering to the sick, the doctors and priests are getting mad, and we were threatened and commanded not to go again among the sick. (copy in Jensen, vol. 1)

"Every family mourned its dead and the living were in despair," the Hawaii Mission History records (Jensen, vol. 1). Elder Karren wrote of the effect on

the Honolulu saints:

I attended meeting twice; there was but very few came to hear; . . . There seems to be a stand hear at present; a cloud of Gloom hanging over this place; those crowded and spirited meetings which were carried on hear a few months ago; has disapeared. Our mission in a great measure has been broken up and we have head to give up our meeting house; so great has been the destruction among this people that the [the survivors] almost despair of life. (Karren, bk 2)

Again according to the Mission History:

Before the close of 1853 the Gospel had been preached so extensively that there was scarcely a district in the Hawaiian group that had not heard the sound of "Mormonism," more or less, and the number of members had increased to upwards of 4,000. (Jensen, vol. 1)

B. F. Johnson mentions in his memoirs, My Life's Review, a general area conference on Maui that year at which 2,000 native members were present, "there being six or seven thousand native saints in the mission." (qtd. in Jensen, vol. 1) And then, Schmitt (76) listed the LDS membership at only 2,778 for the year 1853. Whatever the number, for many it was not only a time of great physical distress, but also a time for remarkable spiritual gifts.

A TIME OF FAITH

The missionaries reported that many gifts of the spirit were given to Hawaiian members. A Brother Keano, for instance, was credited with being the first Hawaiian to exhibit the gift of tongues. This remarkable occurrence, in Lahaina, Maui, happened at the same time as the plague was raging -- July 28, 1853. There are numerous accounts of how the Lord granted many blessings and healings among the Saints because of their great faith. George Q. Cannon in his book, My First Mission, tells of some wonderful miracles.

One day a young man made application to be baptized who had been so sick that he was not expected to live. His elder brother was in the Church, and the evening previous to his baptism the Elders had been called to administer to him. He was so much restored by morning that he was able to arise and afterwards attend the meeting, and was baptized.

The same day Brother Napela and some of the other native Saints had visited a woman who believed in the gospel, who wished to be baptized; she had been unable to walk upright for five years, but she was anxious for them to administer to her, that she might be restored. They laid their hands upon her and commanded her in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to arise and walk. She immediately stood up and walked, and went and was baptized. . . .

Another instance was that of a woman, one of whose

limbs was withered, and who was afflicted with palsy. She was baptized, and was speedily restored to health. . . .

After the meeting was over [Waiehu, Maui, Jan 27, 1853], three persons requested to be administered to, one of whom was a blind man. He had been blind for upwards of thirty years, but his sight was restored to him. He began to amend from the time hands were laid upon him and the next morning he was able to see. . . . His restoration caused a great stir in the neighborhood, for his blindness was well known. (Cannon 63-64)

Elder Tanner tells of a sick woman who had been carried and placed by the roadside to await the Elders on their way to meeting. When they happened by, she asked for a blessing, they administered to her, after which she arose and walked with them to church. They were constantly called on to administer to the sick, and all manner of diseases were healed (Jensen, vol. 1).

So many had been healed of crippling ailments that as one man [May 12, 1853], who had not walked for six months, made his way through the streets toward his baptism, the children of his village chanted among themselves that the Calvinists could not give people legs to walk with like the Mormons did. (Jensen, vol. 1)

Often, other deadly companions lurked near the plague victims, as Elder Henry W. Bigler discovered when he went to visit the branch of the Church in Waimanalo:

On his arrival there July 28th [1853] he visited several houses where the former occupants had either died with cholera or fled to other places, leaving their household goods, hogs, dogs and fowls to take care of themselves. At another place where there were six houses, or families, close together, all the inhabitants had died except three, who had fled. It appeared to Elder Bigler that many died for lack of care and proper nursing. He writes, "On Friday Sept. 2, 1853, I was called to visit a sick boy who was down with the smallpox. His condition was so critical that I had hitherto seen nothing so awful. The stench was almost unbearable and the poor boy seemed one mass of corruption. His mother was a member of the Church. I administered to him and told his father to rub him with consecrated oil, give him some ginger tea and keep him out of the wind. . . . some time afterwards (Sept 19th) I saw the little boy who had recovered; . . ." (Jensen, vol. 1)

Sometime in February of 1853, an especially remarkable event took place which Brother Cannon recalls:

I have mentioned an Elder whose name was Uaua. He was a man of considerable faith. His wife had been stricken down in his absence and had been, to all appearance, dead for some three hours before he had arrived at his

house.

In that country when a person dies, the friends and relatives of the family assemble together and manifest their grief by wailing. They were indulging in these lamentations and outcries when he returned, every one supposing that she was dead. He was, of course, very much shocked; but the first thing he did was to anoint her and lay hands upon her; and, to the astonishment of all who had assembled, she instantly recovered.

I might multiply instances of this kind without number; but I write these, to show you that the same works and power of God, which were manifested anciently through the faith of the servants and Saints of God have been shown forth in our day and under the administration of the people of God, who now live.

The natives of the Sandwich Islands had great faith to lay hands on the sick, and also to have hands laid upon them when they were sick. It was not contrary to their traditions for them to believe in this ordinance, for their old native priests, before the missionaries came, had considerable power which they exercised, and in which the people had confidence. (Cannon 65)

It seems to have been common knowledge that those sick with the smallpox were being healed by priesthood administration. The news traveled fast to the outer islands. An account of some infected persons who had escaped from Honolulu and made their way to the Kohala coast at Honokane offers an interesting example:

There had also come from Honolulu about 20 persons whom it was supposed were exposed to smallpox. They were fined for coming to Honokane under the circumstances and were placed among our people. The priest Mr. Bond had heard that out of 800 who had died in Honolulu only two of the Saints had died, and that they for some cause had not sent for the Elders. So he placed the people who had been exposed to the small pox in our branch among our members, remarking as he did so, "Now, if the Mormons can escape the small pox, let them do it. It seemed as if the Lord had sent us there to save the people. Satan had apparently determined to destroy the work, even if he must destroy the people in order to do it; but, the Lord overruled all in our favor, for although some of the imported people died with the disease none of ours had it. (Jensen, vol. 1)

So it was, that in the year 1853, the first Hawaiian member died rather prematurely, the islands were hit with a terrible plague, and great faith and healing were observed. We might expect that those faithful saints would have been spared the awful suffering and death from smallpox, but that was not the case. The record of Benjamin Franklin Johnson, who was appointed to be the first president of the Honolulu Branch, yields a precious insight into the extent of the smallpox menace and its effect on the saints. To his horror, Brother Johnson noticed that while many non-Mormons who received administrations

recovered, an alarming number of Mormons did not:

Native elders now in the field were exerting a powerful influence, and it almost seemed as though all the Hawaiian people would become members of the Church; but at this time the smallpox was getting its start among them. . . . But as soon as it was really known to be smallpox, the old missionaries left their flocks and fled. Many of the physicians were too frightened to remain. . . .

Brother Lewis, Brother Farrar and I were still together in the city, and we agreed that by the help of the Lord we would stand by each other and stay with the native saints. . . . As soon as some of the natives began to die with smallpox, it struck the people as a panic; . . . and before we were aware of it almost the whole native population was sick, dying, or lying dead. Such was the terrible condition of the city that State's Prisoners were pardoned on condition they would assist in burying the dead. At first the health officers took them to hospitals or pest houses, and to escape this many fled to the mountains and died in some by-place. Accompanying Brother Lewis to the hospital at one time to look after some of our brethren, the stench from the dead and dying so overcame me that I was helped from the room to the open air. And going from house to house among the sick we found in yards where perhaps twenty had lived, now not a soul alive, while some of the dead were still unburied. Often in one day we used two quart bottles of oil in anointing the sick, for we ministered to all who asked us, feeling they were all our Father's covenant children.

I cannot describe the piteous sights we often witnessed. On one occasion coming to a house where lay upon the mats a man and boy too swollen to be recognized, as we ministered to the man he seemed to revive and tried to talk, and I felt sure it was one of our brethren. I looked around and saw a coat which I knew belonged to one of our dearest friends, a most devoted member of the church. All the rest of his family were dead and he was nearly gone. So went most of our dearest and most zealous brethren and friends -- our most active help in the ministry -- and my heart wept, and my whole soul cried out to the Lord for that poor people. I was in great affliction, and marveled that the Lord would permit all his most faithful servants to die, so dear to us, and whose help we so much needed. I pondered the subject prayerfully until the light of the Lord shone upon my understanding, and I saw multitudes of their race in the spirit world who had lived before them and there was not one there with the priesthood to teach them the gospel. The voice of the Spirit said to me, "Sorrow not, for they are now doing that greater work for which they were ordained,

and it is all of the Lord." So I was comforted, knowing that through the Spirit of Elijah the hearts of the children were now being turned to the fathers in the Spirit land. Of the 4000 who died in the vicinity of Honolulu, some 400 had received the gospel, including the most efficient and the very best of the native saints. (Johnson 156-158)

Andrew Jensen cites The Millennial Star's report that over three thousand Hawaiians died with about 200 of the saints (Jensen, vol. 1): With either the count of 200 LDS in 3000 deaths, or 400 LDS in 4000 deaths, the summary seems to be that from 6% to 10% of the deaths due to smallpox were native members of the Church. Yet officially, Mormons only made up 3.7% of the population (Schmitt 74, 76). It is not clear from the conflicting sources just what percentage of the population had indeed affiliated itself with the church. It does appear that at least Benjamin F. Johnson thought there were a disproportionate number of LDS members who died in this plague, in spite of the fact that during that very time there had been a great outpouring of the gifts of the spirit, including the gifts of healing and being healed.

THE HAWAIIAN OHANA

I choose to believe with Elders Tanner, Karren, and Johnson that some of the best of the newly converted children of Israel in Hawaii, left this world to teach their ohana waiting in the spirit world. It is not difficult to believe that ancient Hawaiian traditions had kept alive their connections to that ohana through the chants which told the stories of over 80 generations of ancestors.

By 1842, Hawaiians, with their newly defined alphabet and great interest in literacy, had begun to publish, in their own Hawaiian language newspapers, the treasured and sacred oral memories of the ohana. One chosen to be a "keeper" of the oral history would often have committed to memory scores of chants covering literally hundreds of generations. When the LDS missionaries arrived, some of the converts may well have realized why the collective memory of the ohana had been so tenacious. In the hearts of many of the "most efficient and the very best" there was most probably a desire to share the wonderful news of Jesus, the Redeemer, with those in the ohana whose names had been sung unwaveringly through the ages.

Is it any wonder that by 1919, 66 years after this unprecedented exodus of missionaries to the spirit world and after the collection and publication of thousands of chants and meles, representing more generations of information than was then or is, even now, available in any European country, that the Lord would have his prophet, Joseph F. Smith, come to dedicate a place where the saving ordinances might be made available to the ohana of Hawaii? Is it a surprise to find that among the first proxy ordinances performed in the Hawaii Temple are the great father and mother of Hawaii, Wakea and Papa, and scores of their descendants? The ancient meles were among the very first sources used for identifying those needing temple work.

MODERN TEMPLE BUILDING

I remember about ten years ago, while working in the Priesthood Genealogy

offices of the Church, how frequently one of the coordinators would mention that a stake president or regional representative or interested member had asked one of the standard questions and someone had given the standard answer: How can we get the Church to build a temple in our area? Show them that you can support the work of the temple with research from the people of the area and you can have a temple.

I believe there was no place in all the world in 1919 that was any more prepared to support the work of a temple -- with centuries of records, over 50 years of preparation by missionaries to the dead, and a tried and faithful membership -- than Hawaii. The reward for this extraordinary effort was the Hawaii Temple. It stands as a monument to centuries of hearts turned to the fathers. But, even though its been 70 years since the work for the ohana was begun, many of the olis and meles are yet untouched. There is still work to be done so that the extended family of all Hawaiians, the Hawaiian Ohana can be complete.

[Author's note: In researching the Church in Hawaii it was discovered that the earliest membership records we have are from 1880 (to the present). Those Hawaiian members who died between 1850 and 1880, or who became inactive before 1880, or whose families became disaffiliated with the church before 1880 are probably NOT recorded in such a way that they have been processed for their temple ordinances. Everyone listed on the 1880 lists who is deceased has automatically been submitted for that work, and, of course, families involved in active research may have submitted names of other early members who do not appear on the 1880 lists. But, there may be several thousand unidentified early baptized members who have not yet received their temple blessings. John W. Kahumoku was one such oversight and the discovery that he did not have ordinances has spurred a search for the names of others. A list of some 600 names, mostly male, has been collected from a variety of sources and is being prepared for submission. Any information that families have about these early saints would be much appreciated.]

NOTES

1. The Hawaiian word ohana translates in simplest terms to "family," but the visitor to Polynesia will come to realize that this is not meant to be the tiny nuclear family of modern U.S. suburbia. This is the fully-extended generational family. This is the constantly "flowing through the dwelling place" family of aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins of various numbers and degrees without which the Polynesian is heartsick and lonely. Ohana is the embracing, animating center of life--one's family.

2. This name is spelled in a variety of ways in the sources cited. For clarity and consistency this is the way it will appear. It is the spelling that family members use most frequently today.

3. Some of the sources cited are unedited drafts or handwritten journal entries. They are represented in this paper without correction to grammar, mechanics, or inventive spelling.

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