"Hurricane Iniki Experience"
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On Friday, September 22, 1992, Hurricane Iniki passed over the Island of Kauai with wind speed averaging 165 miles per hour with gust winds of over 200 miles per hour, leaving behind the most costliest and devastating disaster ever to hit the island of Kauai. This hurricane did cause many island residents to make changes to their lives and also their relationship with their families and neighbors. This morning, ill could, I would like to share with you some of the good that can come from a disaster such as Iniki.

Prior knowledge that we gain from hurricane Iwa, helped us to be better prepared for Hurricane Iniki. Early warnings from the news media and also our some what effective home teaching contact by telephone did prepare our saints for this calamity which magnitude we did not know. We did, as much as possible, prepare our homes and also had families relocated or asked them to go to the disaster shelter areas. After doing as much as could be done, our family decided that if the winds were greater then a hundred MPH we would go to one of our schools classroom which was in a concrete building.

To know a hurricane is to be in it. It is difficult to explain and comprehend the force and power of a hurricane, especially one with a wind force that Iniki had. A prayer of protection was offered by the families that were in the classroom for the safety of the people of our island. It was wonderful to know, after the storm, that lives had been spared miraculously because of the power of this storm. However, our island physically was not spared by Iniki. A few minutes outside the classroom convinced me that this disaster was greater then we thought possible. We not only witness missing roofs, we witness missing buildings.

One of the families in the building with us, lost the roof off their home during hurricane Iwa. We were convinced that their roof did not survive this storm again. When we were finally given permission that night to return to check our homes, it was painful for this father to witness the lost of his roof again. Our home was also damaged, but not as severely as many other homes on the island. The next few days were spent cleaning up and putting temporary covers over our homes.
Our first sacrament meeting after the hurricane was held at a members home. At that meeting, strong testimonies of gratitude were borne because of the preservation of our families. At that meeting, commitments to support and uphold each other were made. This we felt was important because we knew that in the coming days and months we were going to be asked to uphold others.

After that meeting we had made plans to make a survey of our food, homes that needed immediate help, families that needed to be removed from their unsafe home, meals that were to be prepared. We were prepared to take care of our immediate needs. The only essential need we did not have access to was a means of communicating. We were not able to communicate with anyone on our island or off our island for about 2 weeks. We have since been asked by the Brethren to have an operational Ham Radio system in our stake.

The next few weeks were spent cleaning up, covering roofs and visiting with families. One of our first major assignments, to help in the recovery effort, was to identify and learn about all the available sources and government agents that we could direct our families to for help. FEMA, Red Cross, insurance agents and church leaders became household words. We were now receiving feedback from church members about when was the church sending help. In all of our discussions we came to the conclusion that we were the church, we had most of the things we needed to help ourselves in our recovery efforts. We started witnessing the operation of the priesthood organization. Our ward was divided in half, the Elders Quorum cared for half of the ward and the High Priest Group the other half.

Homes were visited and assessed whether they were livable or not; families were moved in, temporarily with other families and others were put in hotels. When all of our families were taken care of, we started working on ways to help families repair their homes permanently.

About a month after the hurricane, we had our first shipment of food from church members from the neighbor islands. Some choice experiences were witnessed. I share one with you. My wife and I were given a set of families to deliver food to. On this list were names that requested no visits. We were inspired to visit these homes, and we were welcome by every'

"No Visit" family. I remember visiting one home that was severely damaged. The roof was leaking, windows broken and the ceiling had fallen leaving all the rubbish all over the home. I remember very clearly the
depressed look on this sister's face along with her husband. In my
discussion with her and her husband, they related to me that they were
uninsured but were given an $11,000 loan to repair their home. She said
that the roofer told her that repairs to her roof alone would cost $17,000.
They could not afford to repair their home. I some how made a promise to
her that I would see to it that her home would be fixed. Of course she
looked at me like "right".

In all of our prayers, we had always asked Heavenly Father to help us
find a way to help our members. Our prayers were answered. On my first
trip to Oahu for a seminary meeting, I ran into James Dumaquin, a member
from the Kona Stake. He brought a group of entertainers from Kona to visit
some of our schools. One of the questions he asked me was, do you people
need any help? We can provide you with carpenters, electricians, plumbers
and laborers. This started our first effort in the church on Kauai to help our
members.

My responsibility now was to identify all of the uninsured homes in our
area, meet with the families about their finances, make a materials cost list
and order the material. After this was done, I made arrangement with
Brother Dumaquin and the first work group arrived on Kauai the second
weekend in November. Kona sent 35 people to Kauai. They paid their own
airfare, brought their own food and cooks. They really performed miracles
to the homes and especially families. The family that I mentioned earlier that
had lost their roof twice was one of the homes reroof in two days by the
Kona Stake members. They completed a total of 5 homes in two days.
Friends were made, tears of appreciation were shed, testimonies of
priesthood service were expressed and smiles were returned to the faces
of the families whose homes were repaired. A great lesson on Priesthood
leadership was witnessed by all. We couldn't decide who received the
greater blessing, the receiver or the giver.

I would like to use the remainder of my time sharing with you some
spiritual experiences that happened over the past two years.

Brother Alroy Enos and I really expressed our gratitude to heavenly
Father for preserving our home. Compared to other homes throughout our
island, we really sustained minimal damages. We thought our homes were
only preserved because of good behavior. As we started making
arrangements for our neighbor island members to come over to help us, we
then knew why heavenly Father had preserved our home. We both housed
all of these members in our home. At one period of time we had approximately 35 people in each of our homes, not including our families. Our homes, a few years ago, were dedicated to house visitors and we have been doing this for years.

Prior to Kona returning to our island again, I went out, along with another brother, to make cost estimate for more homes. We had prepared 6 homes for the next visit by Kona. On one of my visits, I remember very clearly walking to the top floor of a home that lost its roof. I remember meeting the brother that own this home sitting down along with his son-in-law and just staring at the roof. I ask him about his home whether it was insured or not, his answer was no, and he thought he could do it myself. However, he said it was too difficult for him and he was really depressed. I told him I would like to help him if he would let me. Again he also gave me that "Right" look. I even doubted ability to do that house because it was a large two story building and a roof that was not easy to repair. Any way materials were ordered. This home was completed and happy faces returned. This brother was inactive and after that experience he started coming to church.

I must now tell you another experience that happened to the Kona group that was related to this house. The supervisor for the Kona group was a retired contractor and he related this story to us at a testimony meeting before they returned to Kona on their second trip. About a week before they were to returned to Kauai he hurt his back. He couldn't walk or get out of bed. He told Brother Dumaguin that he would be able to return the second time. However, he said that he got this strong impression during the week that he had to return to Kauai. On the day that they were flying to Kauai, he still could not move. He said he ask his wife to help him into the car and on his way to the airport he told heavenly Father that he was going to the airport, that if he was meant to go to Kauai please help him to walk.

He said when he arrived at the airport, he got out of his car, picked up his bag and walked to the air plane. When he was on the top of the roof of the home that had a difficult roof to repair, he received an impression as to why he had to come to Kauai. Nobody else would have been able to supervise that difficult job.
The same Kona Stake group returned to Kauai about two weeks before Christmas. This time they brought a total of 65 people. Again they brought their crew, the food and the cooks. They also brought members from the Tongan Branch especially to come and cook food for a Christmas party that they put on for our ward. What a party! On the evening of their arrival they brought baskets of fruits and food which they distributed to the neighborhood while singing Christmas songs.

The Tongan Branch President also bore testimony telling us that his family had sacrifice some of their Christmas money so that their Father could purchase some food and his airline ticket to Kauai.

Among the members from Kona were also some non-members. One sister, a non-member whose husband was a member of the Elders (~uorum Presidency related this story to another sister. She said that while she was working on the roof of one of the homes, he receive a very warm feeling that she should get baptized. The group left Kauai on Fast Sunday to get home in time for Fast and Testimony meeting. This sister bore her testimony about her experience without telling her husband. She was baptized.

We were helped over a period of a year by members from Keeki Ward, Kona Stake; Pahoa Ward, Hilo Stake; Kohala Ward, Kona Stake, Pukalani and Kahului Ward, Maui Stake, Hoolehua and Kaunakakai Ward, Kauai Ward, BYU-Hawaii Band and Hawaii Kai I Ward (Christmas gifts for those who might not have). Every ward that visited our island has related to us how much closer their priesthood quorums and groups have become because of their sacrifices.

Members of our island have been richly bless by the unselfish services given us by our neighbor island members. Families on our island have become closer, our Stake is beginning to work closely together. We have become more aware of Heavenly Fathers love and watchful eyes over us and have learned much about the operation of our priesthood organization.

In closing I think I can express my feelings about the spiritual, emotional and physical growth that happened to people on Kauai, by sharing with you another conversation that took place with an insurance agent, who was a former Bishop on Oahu. He said that when he heard about the approaching hurricane, he went home and made a video tape and list of everything they owned and put it away safely in his bank deposit box. When he made his first visit to Kauai, and found some of his clients, their first
remark to him was, "Don't worry about us we are okay, go and see my neighbors first they are worst of then we are". He said he learned 2 things on Kauai; first, that people were really concerned about others even though their homes in shambles and second; material things were not important in a disaster. When he returned to Oahu, he went straight to the Bank and threw away his video tape and list of his possessions.