

Chapter XXIII

Mission Tour

July 2, 1964 – July 12, 1964

With one full day behind them. Sheffield and Ramona were ready and eager to tackle day two. Sister Auli'i had got the items on Ramona's list and had stocked the refrigerator and cupboards in their apartment for them, so when they fixed their breakfast, there was plenty to choose from. At five minutes to eight, then knelt together in prayer before leaving their apartment.

Once down stairs, the staff were all at their desks, about their work. Elder Carlson was busy making arrangements for the mission tour and Elder Wallace was looking into chartering an airplane. After saying their good mornings, Sheffield and Ramona went into the office and began going through the folders containing the profiles of the missionaries to get a feel for them. They wanted to understand a little about them before meeting them next week.

It was obvious that it was going to take time to go through all eighty eight of them. After a couple of hours they heard someone come in the front door. A familiar voice asked Elder Carlson, "Are President and Sister Brason available?"

As Elder Carlson answered the question for him, Sheffield went to the door and said, "Well, if it isn't Manti and Iolani. Come in."

As they entered the president's office, they greeted them with handshakes. "So are you getting settled in?" Manti asked.

"We plunged right in. We're planning a tour of the mission nest week, with a visit to every zone. I think we're planning on coming up your way on Wednesday. Elder Carlson is working on the arrangements as we speak."

"Nothing like jumping in with both feet, I always say." Manti smiled. "As promised we're in town today so we thought we'd stop by and see how you're doing."

"Thanks for the use of your car. We really appreciated it. It was nice to have a couple of days to relax and enjoy ourselves. It's out back. Roy filled it with gas and even washed it for you."

"Aw. You didn't have to do that."

"It was the least we could do." Sheffield assured his friend.

They visited for a while before Manti and Iolani went on their way. Before they left, Elder Carlson talked to Manti about their visit to Laie on Wednesday. Sheffield and Ramona went back to studying the missionary profiles. From the file and a photograph they got to know the basics about each one, such as where they were from and other background information. At least when they met them, they would have an idea of who they were.

After lunch, Elder Wallace informed Sheffield that he had chartered a plane for him. Going off the

specifications that he had been given, he found 1963 Cessna 210 at the Honolulu Airport. All it took to secure the aircraft was the number on Sheffield's pilots license. Later in the afternoon, they met with Elder Cooley to go over the finances more in depth. Every check required two signatures, one of the office staff and the president's. He also had to sign off on all reconciliation reports as well. Ramona paid particular attention to what Elder Cooley had to say. In fact, she spent the rest of the afternoon with him as he went into greater detail.

While she was getting educated on the finances, Elder Carlson met with Sheffield to go over the mission tour. He had arranged for use of the chapel in each location and had scheduled the meetings. He said that everyone was anxious to meet them. While he was making the arrangements, the assistants were getting the word out to the respective zone leaders.

That evening was their first opportunity to meet the rest of the mission presidency. Sheffield had Sister Auli'i plan on four more so they could get acquainted over dinner. Sheffield had asked them to bring their wives for an informal meeting so they could get to know them. Richard Kaaloa, the first counselor, and his wife Connie lived in Kona on Hawaii. He was Hawaiian through and through, but Connie was a hapa haole, or part Hawaiian and part caucasian. They owned a fleet of charter sport fishing boats that took tourist out on deep sea fishing day excursions. He had grown up in a family that made their living in commercial fishing. When Dick took over the family business, he found it was more profitable to charter out his boats and crews to tourists. Since they owned a number of boats, that was how they got around the islands. They met President Galloway and his wife Cindy at the marina and they gave them a ride up to Mililani.

Dwight and Cindy Galloway lived in Honolulu and he was the chief of operations for United Airlines at the Honolulu International Airport. Sheffield found that interesting because he was offered a similar job with American Airlines when he retired from the Navy the first time. Dwight had been in that position for three years after being transferred from the same position in Salt Lake City, where they both called home.

Sister Auli'i set six places at one end of the long table while the missionaries were at the other end. Over dinner they had a chance to visit and get acquainted. After dinner, Sheffield met formally with his presidency so they could discuss the specifics of their assignments, which was pretty much what he had done in the Central Atlantic States Mission. President Kaaloa covered the Hawaii and Maui districts, while President Galloway covered the Kauai District and was the mission representative to the three stakes on Oahu. It might look like he had a bigger assignment, but it really wasn't since all he did with the stakes was to coordinate with them, so it worked out even.

After the meeting, they socialized some more. The Galloways went home, but the Kaaloas spent the night in the guest room, as the long ride back to Kona would have gotten them home way after dark. It was

common for him to spend the night after their weekly presidency meetings.

On Saturday, Sheffield concentrated on his presentation for the zone conferences. He built upon the analogy of hunting U-boats in the South Atlantic that he had given off the cuff to the office staff on Wednesday. His main emphasis was on setting goals based on objectives in reach rather than arbitrary quotas. Sheffield was still formulating the approach that he wanted to implement throughout the mission. Elder Mattheson was just about finished with reading *The Challenge* and Elder Shumway had started.

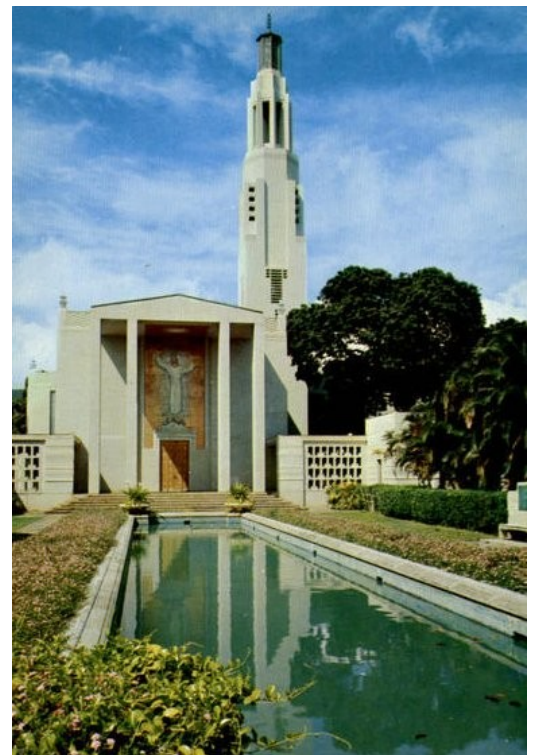
That was the 4th of July and missionaries don't get holidays off. Sheffield and Ramona found themselves too busy with things to pay much attention to the holiday, other than the flag that Roy had posted on the front of the mission home. They did however wonder what the kids and their families were doing that day. That evening they did watch the fireworks over the harbor from their balcony.

On Sunday, Sheffield and Ramona attended the ward that they now lived in. For the first time since they had been there, the mission president's car was brought out of the garage. The meetinghouse was just off the Pali Highway a little under two miles down the valley from the mission home. They were welcomed with open arms by the members, who were excited to attend the special fireside the next evening and were looking forward to hearing from them.

During the morning on Monday, Sheffield put the finishing touches on his presentation. Since this would be his first time to give it, it was bound to need to be revised for the next time. Mililani was quit that morning since it was P-day and the office staff were not about their work, and the mission home staff had the day off. Sheffield managed to find his assistants and rehearsed it with them. While he has doing that, Ramona fixed lunch for them.

At two o'clock they left the mission home and drove to the Honolulu Stake Tabernacle. Once while there on vacation they had attended church in the unique building at 1560 South Beretania Street. Elder Mattheson and Elder Shumway were already there and had the building opened up and had found a room for the interviews. While waiting for the first of the missionaries from the Honolulu Zone to arrive, Sheffield and Ramona wandered around the Tabernacle to have a look around.

Rather than being a single building, it was actually a complex of five buildings that were connected by covered walkways or lanais. The main building was the tabernacle itself. The one hundred twenty foot by forty five foot chapel was



designed to comfortably seat one thousand people. The choir loft, located behind the off-centered podium at the front of the chapel, seated one hundred fifty people and housed both a piano and an organ. Another unique feature of the Tabernacle is its natural acoustical properties similar to the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. When standing in the back of the tabernacle, one could clearly hear a person whispering in the choir loft some one hundred twenty feet away.

A one hundred forty one foot tower stood at the intersection of the two main structures and gave balance to the appearance. Upon the dedication of the tabernacle on August 17, 1941 by President McKay, the tower was the second tallest structure in Honolulu. A twelve foot mosaic of Jesus Christ in a benedictory pose, with His head erect, arms outstretched, and a friendly expression was over the entrance of the Tabernacle. The image of Christ was made of over one hundred thousand colored glass tiles.

Connected at a right angle to the chapel was a cultural hall with a hardwood floor. The one hundred twenty foot by forty foot hall was separated from the chapel by heavy curtains. When the curtains were opened, chairs could be set up in the cultural hall, and seating for the tabernacle chapel would be doubled. The cultural hall was used for activities such as basket ball games, dances, and banquets. There was also a stage at the far end for plays and other entertainment.

The remaining buildings in the complex included a long row of classrooms that flanked the outside courtyards, one housed the offices for the ecclesiastical leaders, and another was a chapel large enough for four hundred people to be used for local ward services.

The buildings were designed to be opened on three sides to take full advantage of the cooling trade winds and the shade of the trees. They were situated as to capture the natural environment by facing the beautifully planted courtyards. When the doors were open, it created an intimate relation between the interior of the tabernacle and the garden.

By the time they finished their self guided tour, some of the missionaries had arrived and it was time to start the interviews. After greeting those who were there so far, Sheffield and Ramona took Elder Alan Long, the zone leader into the interview room. Sitting side by side, with the seasoned Elder in front of them, they asked him to tell them about himself and about his stewardship. This interview took slightly longer than they had planned, but when they were finished, they had a good feel for the humble and faithful Elder. The succeeding interviews didn't take as long, averaging about five minutes each. As they visited, Sheffield took notes to record his impressions of each one. After an hour and half, they had interviewed all ten Elders and four Sisters in the zone. They already knew Sister Manning and Sister Williams from living at Mililana.

When they finished the last interview, they moved into the Relief Society Room for the Zone Conference. Elder Mattheson conducted the meeting and after a hymn and an invocation, Elder Long, conducted district competition in a scripture bee between the two districts. It was much like an old fashion

spelling bee, only it was reciting the missionary scriptures. Sheffield was impressed with how well they had them memorized. Some of the newer missionaries were not as well versed as the those who had been out longer, but that was to be expected. He had read the scriptures and was familiar with them, but not to that extent. He decided that if he were going to effectively lead them that he had better deepen his grasp of the scriptures.

When it came his turn, President Brason stood before the missionaries and began his presentation. It was about all they could do to keep from cheering when he announced that there would be no more quotas. They listened intently as he laid out his views on setting goals as illustrated by his analogy of hunting U-boats in the South Atlantic. He asked them to prayerfully evaluate each of their investigators and to set their goals accordingly. The fact that their investigators had their agency had a lot to do with determining if they actually achieved their goals, however the more effectively the missionaries were in teaching and testifying, the more likely their investigators were to respond to the power of the Spirit. He indicated that further changes would be coming as soon as he had figured out how to implement them. He didn't go much into his own story as he and Ramona would go into that that evening at the member fireside, to which all of the investigators were invited. He did however close with his testimony.

Following his remarks Sheffield called on Ramona to bear her testimony. And after her, the time was opened to missionaries to bear their testimonies and share any recent faith promoting experiences. As one by one they all stood, the feeling of the Spirit in the room competed with the aroma coming from the kitchen. After the last testimony was expressed, there was a closing hymn and a benediction on the meeting.

From the Relief Society Room, they migrated into the cultural hall where dinner was hosted by Honolulu Stake Relief Society. The Stake Presidency and their wives joined them for dinner. Over dinner they got acquainted. Sheffield and Ramona had learned from experience from all of the missionaries who sat at their table over the years that missionaries are always hungry. Fortunately there was plenty of fried chicken and potato salad to go around. Some of them were working on their third serving when Sheffield and the Stake Presidency the adjourned to the Stake President's office for a brief meeting. While they were meeting, Ramona and their wives visited as they helped clear away.

By the time the men emerged from their meeting, the chapel was already beginning to fill up as the members of the Honolulu Stake began arriving for the fireside. Sheffield and Ramona were escorted to the stand where they sat with the stake presidency and their wives. By the time the stake president began the meeting, there were two or three hundred people there.

After a hymn and a prayer, the stake president introduced the new mission president and his wife. Ramona went first and told their story, a story that she had told many times. At the end of her remarks she told of how she felt that she was right at home in the islands and then bore her testimony. Sheffield talked

more about his own background and how he had come to that point. From there he talked about the missionary work in the stake and called upon their support in seeing the work succeed. In the end he too concluded with his testimony.

After the closing hymn and benediction, they were inundated by people who wanted to introduce themselves and welcome them to the mission. They met so many people that it was impossible to remember who they all were. As overwhelming as that was, even more so was the outpouring of love that they felt. On the drive back to the mission home, Sheffield and Ramona discussed how well the first leg of their mission tour had gone.

The next morning, Sheffield revised his talk a little to try to improve upon it and make it more effective. That afternoon they drove to the Pearl Harbor Stake Center at 1723 Beckley Street on the west side of Honolulu. It was a much newer building, located next door to the high school where Sandy had attended when they lived there. The afternoon and evening went much like the day before. After the member fireside, they were greeted by a Navy Commander and his wife.

“Admiral Brason,” the Commander began. “You might not remember me, but my name is Chauncey Haggerty. I was a lieutenant jay gee aboard the Reprisal while she was your flagship off Korea. I met you on occasion while standing duty as the officer of deck.”

“I’m sorry Commander, but I can’t say as I remember you.”

“Don’t be. I’m sure you came in contact with a lot of people during your career. I know I can’t remember everyone who I have interacted with. I’d like you to meet my wife, Darlene.”

“I’m pleased to meet you. This is my wife Ramona, but you already know that by now.”

“I’m pleased to meet you President and Sister Brason.” Darlene replied.

Chauncey continued, “When Darlene told me about you being the speaker tonight, I told her, ‘I know him.’ and I had to come. You see, I’m not Mormon but Darlene is. I met her when I was stationed in San Diego and we’ve been married for going on seven years now. I’ve always been impressed with her faith and devotion. Over the years she has been after me to go to church with her which I’ve done from time to time on a few occasions, but I have always resisted her efforts to have me meet with the missionaries. I told her that I was fine with her going to church, but being a navy man didn’t exactly square with being a church man. I have to tell you, something you said really hit me tonight. Actually it wasn’t so much what you said, but the feeling that came over me that impressed me. I think I now want to hear the missionaries, but I’d like for you to be one of them.”

“I’d be happy to.” Sheffield said. “Although I won’t be able to come every time, I would certainly make it a point come on occasion. Let me have your address, and I’ll pass it on to the Elders in your area and they will make contact with you.”

"Were at thirty one Halawa Drive." Chauncey told him.

"No kidding." Sheffield said with surprise. "I know exactly where that is. That's in the officer's neighborhood. In fact that's the same house where my first wife and I lived while I was stationed here assigned to the Enterprise before the war. I'll see to it that Elder Tuttle and Elder Bradbury contact you. In fact, that's them right over there."

Sheffield called them over and introduced them. They not only got their contact information but set an appointment for that Thursday evening. Sheffield explained that he would be out of town then but promised to follow up.

As Sheffield and Ramona got ready for bed that night, Sheffield commented that that day's meetings went better than the day before. And what's more, he had the satisfaction of knowing that perhaps he personally had contributed to the work.

Wednesday was the Oahu Zone Conference in Laie. Sheffield and Ramona left around nine o'clock and drove to Laie and attended the temple before beginning their meetings that day. Afterwards, they met Takara and Teancum for lunch. Their meetings that day followed the same pattern as the day before, with the exception of already knowing the stake president and having met many of the members in Laie.

The first Elder in for an interview with Sheffield and Ramona was Elder Roger Lee, the zone leader, from Logan, Utah. As he came into the room they were using, Sheffield greeted him. "Hello Elder Lee. It's good to meet you."

He surprised them when he answered, "We've actually met before, about five or six years ago."

"Really?" Sheffield responded. "Where?"

"At your daughter's wedding reception in Clarkston." He went on to explain, "You see, my mother and Wayne Gover are cousins."

"We just saw Wayne about ten days ago on our way out here, but he didn't mention that he had a relative in the Hawaii Mission."

"Any way," Elder Lee went on to say, "I was only fifteen at the time but I remember meeting you."

"So," Ramona interjected, "that would make you and Jerry, what? Second cousins."

"Yes ma'am. That's correct. I don't know him all that well because he's twelve or thirteen years older than me."

"My, my. What a small world." Ramona mused. "In my next letter to Janet, I'll certainly mention that we met you."

From his file they had known that he was from Logan, but it hadn't dawned on either of them that he might know the Govers, let alone be related. The file also indicated that he had four months left of his mission. Throughout the remainder of the interview, they got to know him better and something about the

time that he had served.

The interview with Elder Lee took a little longer, but by the time they had met the remaining thirteen Elders and two sisters, they were right on schedule. The Zone Conference followed the same format as the ones the previous two days had gone, although Sheffield was getting better at his presentation.

The dinner following the meeting wasn't hosted by the Relief Society as the others had been, this one was held in banquet hall at the Polynesian Cultural Center. In addition to the missionaries, Manti and Iolani Morley and his counselors in the stake presidency and their wives, the temple president and his wife, the president of the Church College of Hawaii and his wife, and the director of Polynesian Cultural Center and his wife were all in attendance.

President Morley made a big push to have as many of his stake members at the fireside as possible. Even though many of them had to come around from the Central Valley, this was the largest turnout they had so far. That night Sheffield and Ramona stayed with Manti and Iolani.

They didn't have much time to linger and visit with Manti and Iolani the next morning as they had to get over to Kauai. After breakfast, they drove back to the mission home to check in with the staff and pack some fresh clothes. After lunch, Roy drove them to the airport where the Cessna 210 that Elder Wallace had arranged was waiting and ready. While Sheffield was checking out the plane, Elder Simmons dropped off the Assistants.

This plane was a very nice aircraft. It had a large spacious cabin that seated six adults comfortably and was faster than as his Staggewing. As nice as it was, it wasn't as luxurious or as classic. After stowing their overnight luggage they boarded the plane. At first Elder Shumway was a little hesitant because he had never flown in a small plane. Neither had Elder Mattheson for that matter. Sheffield was already in the plane behind the controls, so it was up to Ramona to reassure him that it would be alright. Somewhat reluctantly, he got in and fastened his lap belt. Ramona got in the front seat next to Sheffield while Elder Mattheson got in the back with his companion.

Once everyone was aboard, Sheffield started the engine and the three bladed propeller spun to life. When he was ready, he was directed by the control tower to taxi to the secondary runway and wait for clearance to take off.



“Cessna November – five – four – one – three – echo, this is Honolulu Tower, You are cleared for take off on runway four – Lima.”

“Roger Honolulu Tower.”

As Sheffield increased the throttle, the knot in Elder Sumway's stomach tightened. When he

released the brakes and the plane sprinted down the runway into a twelve mile an hour wind out of the southwest and into the air, Elder Shumway nearly hyperventilated.

“Now that wasn't so bad now was it Elder?” Ramona called over her shoulder.

When he didn't answer, she turned around to see that he was a white as a sheet, holding on for dear life. Elder Mattheson was taking in the view as the plane climbed with the ocean looming to the southwest.

“He'll be alright in a few minutes.” Elder Mattheson said. “He's like this when we fly commercial, only not as bad.”

Sheffield retracted the landing gear as he banked to the left, heading northwest. They were still low as they passed over the south end of Pearl Harbor. “Look,” Sheffield said to Ramona, “There's a carrier in port.”

“You would notice that wouldn't you Babe.”

“Would you Elders like to have a look?”

“Sure.” Elder Mattheson answered.

Elder Shumway, who still hadn't regained his composure, didn't respond.

Sheffield circled around to get a better look. “Well, wouldn't you look at her. Its my old friend the Crown Point. I wonder what she's doing here.”

After getting a good look, Sheffield climbed higher as he completed the circle and crossed over the southern end of the Waianae Mountain Range. A few minutes later when the crossed the coastline at the the community of Nanakuli, Elder Shumway began to settle down.

Again Ramona asked, “Are you alright?”

“I'm sorry.” he apologized. “But I'm terrified of flying. I'd much rather go by boat.”

“Why didn't you say something?” Sheffield asked.

“I didn't want to cause a bother. I'll be alright. Taking off is the worst part.”

Once they crossed the coast, it was eighty six miles across the open water of the Kaieie Channel. On the way across, Elder Mattheson asked Sheffield about his flying days when he was in the Navy. He listened intently as Sheffield told two or three of his favorite stories, that Ramona had heard a thousand times, but never tired of.

About a half an hour later, Sheffield banked around to the southwest and flew parallel to coastline just offshore as he made descent towards the airport. Elder Shumway clutched the back of the mission president's seat with white knuckles as he braced himself for the landing. He missed the spectacular view of the Garden Island as they came in. A moment later they were on the ground after only thirty five minutes in the air.

“Now that wasn't so bad was it Elder Shumway.” Sheffield said as he taxied over to the parking area.

“If we were coming by boat, we’d just be rounding Barber’s Point.”

Once the plane was parked and the engine shut off, the four of them emerged from the plane’s cabin and stepped onto the ground. One of them did so with wobbly legs. They walked the short distance to the hangar where two of the mission fleet Chevy Novas were waiting.

Elder Jake Wiemer the Zone Leader of the Kauai Zone and his companion Elder Gale Wells along with Elder Andrew Gibby the district leader of the Hanalei District and his companion, Elder Blake Masters were there to meet them and drive them just under the two miles to the meetinghouse at 4580 Ehiku Street. The edifice built in 1962 was very unique with a tall chapel with steep pitched roof. In the front of the chapel were two tall windows on either side that went clear to the roof. Off to the left was a free standing steeple. A veranda warped around the chapel and tied into the rest of building that had a wing at a right angle to the rear of the building and another wing parallel to the chapel, with a lawn in between.

Once inside, the uniqueness of the building continued as the chapel and the cultural hall both had a vaulted ceilings. Sheffield and Ramona were shown to an a room in the parallel wing, next to the Relief Society Room, from which to conduct their interviews. As with the other conferences, they began with Elder Wiemer, the zone leader. With only ten missionaries in the zone, they had more time to spend with each one. There was a senior missionary couple in the zone who they met with together. George and Freda Capps from Smithfield, Utah covered the Kekaha Branch that took in the entire western half of Kauai and Niihau, the forbidden island. Being off limits to outsiders, they were not permitted to go there, although only a handful of the island’s one hundred thirty native Hawaiian residents were members of the Church.

The rest of the day followed the same format as the previous conferences. Following the member fireside, Sheffield had some additional business to attend to in the capacity of the mission president. There was couple who had been married civilly that was now ready to be sealed in the Temple at Laie. They had been interviewed by the branch president, but needed to meet with him for their final interview. The Paikulis had been married for eight years and had three children, including a tiny baby, to be sealed to them. As branch president, Sheffield had conducted many temple recommend interviews over the years, so his first one as mission president came to him naturally. Following his interview with the Paikulis, he had a couple of district callings to extend.

Since the district president lived in Hanalei on the north shore, Sheffield and Ramona were invited to spend the night with the first counselor in the district presidency. Frank Alapai and his wife 'Olina lived in Hanamaulu, which was adjacent to Lihue on the north. President Alapai, was marine biologist and had recieved his degree at the Univeristy of Hawaii and was fortunate to return to his home town where he worked for the State of Hawaii. They had a quite large home on Hulei Road on the slope of Kalepa Mountain that over looked Hanamaulu Bay.

The next morning, before they had to leave, Frank gave Sheffield and Ramona what he called the nickel tour of Lihue. The first place he took them was to Wailua Falls about five miles north of Lihue. Since the falls were a little off the beaten path, Frank and 'Olina rounded up some clothes for Sheffield and Ramona. Sheffield happened to be about the same size as Frank, but to find something to fit Ramona, 'Olina had to go to their fifteen year old daughter's closet to find something.

The drive took them through some lush green scenery as they came to south end of the Wailua River. The falls could be seen from the road, but to get a good look there was a path to the bottom of the falls, but it was muddy and a little slippery. The falls cascaded in two streams one hundred and seventy three feet into the Wailua River below. It was spectacular sight and definitely worth the trip. While they were out and about, Frank and 'Olina took them by other landmarks and attractions of the area. When their nickel was up, they took them home to change their clothes and fix an early lunch for their guests.

Frank and 'Olina drove them to the airport where the Cessna was ready and waiting. A few minutes later, Elder Mattheson and Elder Shumway were dropped off as well. They boarded the plane and Sheffield started the engine and began taxiing to the end of the runway. Again the knot tightened in Elder Shumway's stomach. As Sheffield took to the sky, the take off had the same affect on his queasy passenger. They took off into the southwest and banked toward the ocean as he brought up the landing gear on their way to twelve thousand feet, well below the Cessna's twenty five thousand foot ceiling.

About twenty five minutes later, they crossed the Oahu coast line at Kaena Point at the extreme western tip of the island. Flying west by southwest along the Wainae Range, across the Central Valley, over the Koolau Mountains and crossed the coastline at Kaneohe and out over the Kaiwi Channel. A few minutes later they crossed the Molokai coast at Ilo Point at the northwest tip of the island and flew diagonally across the island and out over the Pailolo Channel at Kalaelo Harbor on the southeastern corner of Molokai. A few minutes more and they crossed the coast of Maui just south of Kapalua and on to Kahululi, out over Kahululi Bay to circle around for the landing approach. The entire flight took right at one hour and just after one o'clock they landed at the Kahululi airport.

Again, two mission fleet Novas were waiting to drive them the three and three quarters of a mile to the meetinghouse at 125 W Kamehameha Ave. The building was brand new and had only been completed a earlier in the year. The Elders and Sisters, including a senior couple, began arriving soon after, anxious to meet the new mission president. Only Elder Simmons was absent. It was hoped that he would be cleared by the doctor to return to work the at the beginning of the next week. The meetings that day went about the same as the ones before it. After the member fireside, Sheffield had some interviews lined up with a few members of the district. That night, Sheffield and Ramona stayed in the home of the district president, Syllas Collins and his wife Mini. The next morning over breakfast they got better acquainted before they took them

back to the airport for their flight to Kona.

The ninety two mile trip took just over a half an hour, landing at the airfield north of Kona. This wasn't Sheffield's first time to fly into the Kona Municipal Airport. A few years earlier while on vacation he chartered a plane and he and Ramona flew over from Honolulu. There to meet them was Dick Kaaloo, the first counselor in the mission presidency, who took them and the assistants to his home where his wife, Connie, had lunch waiting for them.

Their home was located on Alii Drive, one mile south of the Kailua pier. Situated just twelve feet above the lava shoreline, from the two story house they had a commanding view of the Pacific Ocean to the west and just twenty seven miles to the southeast Mauna Loa towered 13,679 feet above sea level. Although less impressive, Hualalai rose to 8,271 feet nine miles to the northeast.

After having lunch and little time to rest, Dick took them to the Kona Branch meetinghouse, just over a mile and a half away. Like all of the chapels they held their meetings in over the last six years, this one was also unique. The exterior of black native lava rock and white stucco formed a startling contrast with the lush vegetation of the surrounding hillside. The ceiling of the combined chapel-cultural hall space was raised an extra twenty feet to allow air to flow through the horizontal bands of windows to cool the interior. From the large bands of glass, the landscape came into full view from the inside, bringing nature right into the worship service.

They began as they had in all of the other zone conferences by interviewing the ten Elders, two sisters, and one senior couple. For the first time, they encountered someone with a less than positive attitude and that was Elder Barry Gibson from North Ogden, Utah. Elder Gibson had been serving in Naalehu at the southern tip of the island since he arrived in the mission in February. He had only been with his companion, Elder Ashton for six weeks. He didn't want to get along and refused to follow the rules. In general, he just didn't want to be there. Realizing that he needed to delve deeper into the issue, Sheffield wanted to meet with him again after the other meetings.

During the testimony portion of the zone conference, all of the missionaries had born their testimonies, except for Elder Gibson. Sheffield asked if they could hear from him. He simply responded, "No thank you, President."

Elder Gibson weighed heavily on his mind throughout dinner and during the member fireside. Once again, Sheffield had some interviews and business to conduct with some of the members. Finally he got back to Elder Gibson. As he sat down across from the mission president he kept his head lowered would not look at him.

"Elder Gibson." Sheffield began. "I take it that you don't want to be here."

"No, President. I don't."

“Then why did you come in the first place?”

“Because of my family and girlfriend. My father promised me a job in his company if I did and my girlfriend wouldn't marry me if he didn't.”

“Those are all the wrong reasons, now aren't they. Is there any reason why you can't make the best of it and at least try to get along?”

“Actually, there is. You see, to please my father and go on a mission, I lied about my worthiness. Not only had I broken the Word of Wisdom, but my girlfriend and I were doing it.”

“Oh, I see.” Sheffield sighed. “And by 'doing it' you mean having intercourse. That right there explains a lot. Was this a one time occurrence or a long term affair?”

“We were doing it for six months, right up until the night before I left.” Elder Gibson confessed.

“You do realize what this means, don't you Elder?”

“Yeah, it means that I get to home.” he responded with relief.

“I'm afraid so.” Sheffield said. Then he added, “You remind me of a seaman under my command that I had to recommend for a dishonorable discharge more than twenty years ago. But it ended well for him. For a while he followed wherever trouble led him, but he took my advise and eventually turned his life around and settled down.”

“Are you saying that there is hope for me, too.”

“Absolutely. He moved to my hometown and got a job working for my brothers in law and even married one of their daughters and started a family. Shortly after I joined the church, so did he. He has done very well ever since. You can start over just like he did. Of course that means I'll have to recommend that your Stake President hold a Church court on you when you get home. The outcome will most certainly be excommunication.”

“My mom and dad are going to be crushed.” Elder Gibson said in shame.

“That may be, Elder. But I promise, they won't stop loving you. So here's what's going to happen. When we fly back to Honolulu tomorrow after district conference, you'll come with us and stay at the mission home until we can make arrangements to get you home. I'll have your companion send all of your belongings and I'll make other arrangement for him until we can get him a new companion. We'll talk some more when we get back to the mission home.”

“Thank you President. It feels good to have it off my chest. Now I don't have to worry about it.”

“Wait just a minute. Its not that easy.”

“Sure it is, I go home, get excommunicated and then I'm free. I won't have to worry about trying to keep all these dumb rules. I can do whatever I want.”

“You're missing the whole point, Elder. This interview is over for now. We'll talk some more later.”

Sheffield sent Elder Gibson out of the room and called in Elder Ashton and Elder Frost his district leader and his companion Elder Holden. All he said was, "Elder Gibson will be leaving with me tomorrow and will be going home. Elder Ashton, I need you to gather all of his belongings and send them to the mission home. The three of you will be working both areas until I can get you a new companion. Do you have any questions?"

The three Elders just looked at each other. Then without asking for an explanation, Elder Ashton said, "No President. I don't have any questions. I'll get his stuff together and sent out on Monday."

"Very good. I'll leave it up to you and Elder Frost as to how you want to cover both areas."

After the interviews, President Kaaloa, who had been waiting patiently, took them home. While getting ready for bed, Sheffield was unusually quite. All he told Ramona was that Elder Gibson would be going home. She took it at that without pressing for a reason. She had learned not to when he was the branch president and had to deal with sensitive situations.

On Sunday morning, Ramona stayed behind with Connie while Sheffield went with Dick to the district leadership meeting. That's where Sheffield got a much better idea of the challenges and needs of the Hawaii District. Hilo and Kona were large enough to be wards but the rest of the district was nowhere close to being a stake. It was the same problem that Roanoke had when the Salem Branch was created and Sheffield was called to be the branch president. For another thing, they could also use a lot more missionaries than what they had. Sheffield promised to address their needs over the next several weeks.

Ramona joined him for the general session, which was so well attended that it confirmed their needs. Being the presiding authority, Sheffield was the concluding speaker, following Ramona. After the general session, Sheffield was approached by Elder Ashton and the branch president and his sixteen year old son who offered to be Elder Ashton's companion for the time being. Sheffield took the young man aside and interviewed him and found him to be both willing and capable. He called him to serve a ten day youth mission to serve as Elder Ashton's companion until the next transfer. With his whole family present, he set him apart and gave him a blessing. That solved the problem of having a threesome cover both areas for that long.

Dick and Connie Kaaloa hosted lunch at their home for the Sheffield and Ramona and the district presidency and their wives. The president lived in Hilo on the east shore, the first counselor lived in Honaunau on the west shore, and second counselor lived in Hawi on the northern tip of the island, so they were pretty dispersed from each other.

After lunch and some more visiting, they took Sheffield and Ramona back to the airport, where they met up with the assistants and Elder Gibson. Once everyone was aboard and situated, they took off for the nearly hour long flight that took them over the ocean, until reaching Diamond Head. For the remaining nine

miles, they flew parallel to the shore which gave them an excellent view of Waikiki Beach which was crowded with people on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.

Once on the ground, Elder Carlson was there waiting for them with the president's car and Elder Westlake with one of the mission home cars to take them all back to Mililani. After being away for four days, it was good to be home. The week of meetings had been long, but very productive and rewarding. They met lots of people and got a first hand feel for who they would be working with and the challenges that the mission was faced with. Even though they had spent a lot of time in the islands, they experienced them in a way that they never had before.

In the stack of mail waiting for them, there were letters from each of the kids. After getting unpacked and settled, Romona sat down and wrote a letter to the kids telling them about their mission tour.

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The description of the Honolulu Tabernacle is from "The Last Tabernacle: A Refuge on Oahu" by Matthew O. Richardson in in Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The Pacific Isles, edition. The article can be found at <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/regional-studies-latter-day-saint-history-pacific-isles/4-last-tabernacle-refuge-oahu>

The description of the other buildings, which existed at the time, are based on current photographs.

All people mentioned are fictional.

