

## Chapter XXIX

### Mele Kalikimaka

December 1, 1964 – January 3, 1965

With Thanksgiving behind them, they were well into the holiday season. Mililani was known for its lovely Christmas display and Brother Hanami had it all in place by Thanksgiving, with some help from the office staff on the Monday before. The mansion was decorated with multi color lights strung along the eaves and the shrubby around the house and a lighted lifelike nativity was set up on the front lawn.

For over fifty fifty years, the Matson Line Christmas Tree ships had brought Christmas trees from the Pacific Northwest on the mainland. The rest of the year, they were just plain old cargo ships, but each year they were loaded with a special cargo. Their arrival was highly anticipated and publicized. As soon as the trees were available, Roy got two of them and brought them back to the mission home in his own pickup. One was for the the office and the other was for the mission president's apartment. There were enough decorations in the storage room in the basement for both trees. Decorating them was an afternoon p-day activity.

Tuesday December 1<sup>st</sup> commenced their sixth month in Hawaii. It seemed as if the first five months had flown by. At this point, they were quite settled into their new role and the routine. Other than the day to day things that come up, things operated on a routine. District and zone conferences, interviews with missionaries, interviews with members, transfers, new missionaries coming out, and missionaries going home.

However, December was different. Rather than traveling to all of the zone conferences, there was to be a mission wide conference held in Honolulu just before Christmas to which all of the missionaries throughout the mission came to. During the first week of December, plans and preparations revved up in order to pull it off. It was scheduled for the Tuesday and Wednesday before Christmas and correlated with transfer day.

Those weren't the only plans in the works. Sheffield and Ramona looked forward with anticipation to the visit from the kids and grandkids. Much of the planning had been discussed in letters that went back and forth.

Ramona was busy writing out Christmas cards. All of a sudden their Christmas card list had gotten longer with the addition of the Haggertys, the counselors in the mission presidency, the stake and district presidents (of course the Morleys had been on the list for a number of years already), and others who they had become acquainted with in the last five months.

The Christmas cards had been ordered back in September and featured a picture of Mililani from the year before with the nativity as the focal point, with the mission home all lit up in the background. Arching across the top of the card in big letters in a script type font were the words "Mele Kalikimaka". In smaller

letters arching below the picture, it said, "From the Hawaii Mission".

Inside was the card it said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Because of the number of cards to send out, Ramona resorted to a practice that she had detested in the past; the Xerox Christmas letter. Rather than trying to write one generic letter to fit everyone, she wrote two letters, one to family and friends with whom they had regular contact and one to those with whom they corresponded with once a year through Christmas cards. Sheffield wrote a third letter intended for those within the mission. In another attempt to make them less sterile, the three letters were hand written, instead of typed.

The two letters that Ramona wrote began with, "Mele Kalikimaka from the Brasons." She went on to explain that the concept of Christmas was introduced to the Hawaiians by the Christian missionaries who arrived in the islands in the 1820s. The Hawaiian language had no direct translation for Merry Christmas, so the phrase Mele Kalikimaka was derived directly from English. Since Hawaiian has a different phonological system with only thirteen letters and with certain constraints, "Merry Christmas" became "Mele Kalikimaka".

To those who they had limited correspondence with, she explained that they both had retired from their second careers in May, only to be asked by the Church to come to Hawaii and direct the missionary work in the islands and explained a little of what it entailed. She bore a brief testimony of Jesus Christ and his gospel and invited its recipients to invite the missionaries where they lived into their homes and listen to their message. The second letter briefly told of some of the experiences that they had and also contained a brief testimony. In either case, a very short personal note was added to the bottom and they both signed each one.

Sheffield celebrated his sixty sixth birthday on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup>. They spent the day in Laie with the Morelys. Other than traveling to a district conference in Hilo the following weekend, they stayed close to home. The slower pace seemed to slow down time which only compounded the anticipation of the kids arrival. A few days later, a crate arrived that Craig had shipped to them. It contained wrapped packages for his and Norma's kids to be placed under the Christmas tree.

Because of the holidays, even the transfers were kept to a minimum. But with three Elders, one sister, and one couple going home and the same number coming out, there had to be some juggling around. The transfers were worked out during the week after their trip to Hilo and the notices were sent out with a

special invitation to the mission conference, with the pertinent details.

A lot of time had gone into planning the two day conference. The biggest challenge was logistics. In the past, transportation had been a big issue as each companionship had come on their own. Now that President Kaaloo had his whale watching tour boat, he offered to bring all of the missionaries from Hawaii and Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. Then he would send one of his charter fishing boats to bring the ones on Kauai. Only the Cartwrights in Guam would have to fly over on their own.

The second challenge was overnight accommodations. The mission home simply couldn't accommodate all of them. The sister missionaries would stay in the Elders barracks above the garage, the four couples would be given the guest room and spare bedrooms. Four Elders could have the sisters dorm room. Some of them could be shoehorned in with the office staff, the assistants, and some of the other missionaries who lived nearby. President Galloway could take a few and the rest were farmed out to members of the church willing to open their homes.

One last challenge was getting everyone to and from the Honolulu Tabernacle. To solve that problem, Sheffield directed Elder Masters, the travel coordinator, to rent two Volkswagen micro-buses. The Honolulu Stake Seventies Quorum offered to provide drivers.

With all of the preparations for the mission conference taken care of and the assignments made, the anticipation grew. Everything was also set for the kids to come as well.

The week of Christmas began by attending a special Christmas program in the Nuuanu Ward. On Monday Sheffield and Ramona took care of their personal business, such as Sheffield getting a haircut and some last minute shopping before the kids got there. On Monday evening, the missionaries began arriving from the other islands. The micro-buses took them to their assigned destinations. The rest of the missionaries from the outlying areas on Oahu arrived on Tuesday morning.

A big part of any conference was a personal interview with each missionary, and this time was no exception. With so many to interview at once, One by one, Sheffield only took about three minutes with each one as he visited with them in his office. Even at that, it took him five hours. He began at eight o'clock in the morning and finished at one o'clock. Although the interviews were brief, it gave him the opportunity to look them in the eye, feel of their spirits, and discern their hearts.

During the morning, there was a constant sting of missionaries coming and going at the Mililani as missionaries came and went for their interviews. Many reunited with old companions and friends. It was as if they were on vacation for a couple of days. Sheffield figured that if a little shore leave was good for moral among sailors, it would be good for missionaries, as long as the mission rules were observed. They were free to go site seeing in Honolulu as long as they were in groups of four, no more, no less.

By the time he was finished, there was just enough time for lunch and to get to the Tabernacle,

where the conference was held in the small chapel at two. The conference followed the same format as a typical zone conference, with a few modifications to accommodate the fact that there were ninety four missionaries in attendance. For example, each zone put forth two missionaries each for the scripture bee.

The meeting took an hour and half to present the business and instructions. In Sheffield's remarks, he talked about the state of the mission. He particularly noted that the number of convert baptisms each month had actually surpassed the old quota since it had been abolished. He attributed it to teaching by the Spirit and focusing on realistic goals. He also said that the involvement of the members of Church also contributed to an increase in the number of discussions being taught.

There was a thirty minute break and they reconvened for the testimony portion of the meeting. In a typical zone conference, everyone had an opportunity to express themselves in about forty five minutes. This time, however, the testimonies were limited to two hours, in which time, less than half of those in attendance had the opportunity. At the close of the meeting, a light meal was served in the cultural hall and the missionaries all taken back to where they were staying.

Since the missionaries had all been fed earlier, that evening at dinner, the senior missionary couples were invited to join those who regularly dined with Sheffield and Ramona. Sister `Auli`i had plenty of notice and had planned accordingly. After dinner, those going home reported their missions before leaving the next day.

On Wednesday morning, the two new Elders, one sister, and one couple arrived. Sheffield took each of them into his office one at a time for his first interview with them and to assign them to their areas. As Sheffield meet with Sister Elizabeth Cooke, he sensed that there was something not quite right about her. Sister Cooke was from Las Vegas and was twenty four years old, a little older than most sister missionaries. She gave all of the correct responses and said all of the right things, even when he pressed her a little farther.

He had second thoughts about sending her to the Hilo Zone and wished she was closer so he could keep an eye on her. He also hoped that her companion, Sister Dora Rock who was moving up from junior companion, could handle her. She had only been out seven months and had just turned twenty two a couple of months earlier. But Sheffield cut short his second guessing, because his initial impression was that this arrangement was how it was supposed to be.

The two sister missionaries were quite opposite. Sister Cooke was a very attractive, well groomed woman with an air of sophistication about her. Sister Rock, who was from Brigham City, Utah, on the other hand was the sweet, innocent girl who lived next door. She had a cute figure but was rather plain in her appearance. Sister Rock was the model of humility and had become a very effective missionary with a good understanding of the gospel and a powerful testimony. She had started out in Hana on Maui and was

transferred to Keaau at the end of October. When they were introduced, Sister Rock received her with great excitement.

After receiving the new missionaries, those going home were taken to the airport for their flights home. They would miss out on the mission Christmas party, but that didn't matter, they'd be home for Christmas.

The second day of the conference began at noon in the cultural hall at the Honolulu Tabernacle. All of the missionaries affected by the transfers were now paired up with their new companions for the mission Christmas party. Rather than meetings, this day of the conference was about entertainment and food.

Sheffield began this session of the mission conference by thanking everyone who had a hand in making it happen. He thanked the office staff, past and present for taking time out of their labors to work in the office and take care of the business so crucial to running the mission. He paid tribute to the mission home staff, Sister `Auli`i and Brother and Sister Hanami for all of their work and dedication and had them stand and be recognized. He also recognized his counselors, Richard Kaaloa and Dwight Galloway and their wives who were also in attendance. Last but not least, he paid the highest tribute to his companion, Sister Brason, who was at his side almost constantly and for her contributions, which he characterized as significant.

The entertainment was largely provided from the talents of the missionaries themselves. Elder Stewart the Mission Recorder had solicited talent acts from the missionaries and organized the program. Who knew that the straitlaced Elder Andrew Gibby, the Assistant to the President from Bountiful, Utah, was a stand up comic. He was the master of ceremonies and throughout the program, he worked in his jokes, impersonations, and funny stories.

It wasn't too surprising that Elder Earl Scott from Driggs, Idaho, who was a district leader in the Oahu Zone and was unquestionably the best at memorizing scriptures had quite a repertoire of cowboy poetry, which he had adapted to missionaries. Other numbers included Sister Janet Moody from Boise, Idaho, who had been a drum majorette in school and did a baton routine to the "March of the Toy Soldiers" from the Nutcracker, a routine that she had performed before. Elder and Sister Wynn from American Fork, Utah who had been ballroom dance champions in their younger years, still had their moves. Elder Kirk Harmon, Elder Winston Wright, Sister Halley Williams and Sister Hillary Angel from the Pearl Harbor District had discovered that they harmonized nicely together when they sang in their district meetings. They sang a medley of "White Christmas" and "Mele Kalikimaka".

The show stopper had to have been Ramona who sang, "I'll Be Home For Christmas". The fact that the missionaries looked to her as a mother figure had them all missing home. At the conclusion of her number, she livened things back up by leading the entire mission in several Christmas carols.

After the entertainment, came the food. The combined Honolulu and Pearl Harbor Stake Relief Societies had prepared a Christmas dinner like they would of had at home. There was turkey and ham, Mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, green bean casseroles, salads, and homemade rolls. For desert there were a number of pies, including several pumpkin pies, cakes, cookies, fudge, brownies, and you name it.

After dinner, all of the missionaries returned to their respective areas, some of them to new areas with new companions. The only transfer affecting the mission home was that Elder Paul Stearman, from Roy, Utah replaced Elder Bateman as the mission secretary and the district leader of the office district. For those on the the other island, the boat didn't get them back until after dark.

On Thursday morning, the focus shifted to getting ready for the kids arrival later in the day. Sister Hanami stripped down the beds in the extra bedrooms and remade them to have them ready. Sheffield went through the crate of Christmas presents and set the wrapped packages under the tree along with the gifts that they had bought. Ramona set about baking goodies to have ready for the grandkids.

The morning passed quickly and soon it was to leave at the airport for when their flight arrived at one one o'clock. Craig and Edith and Norma and Wade and their families left Roanoke early that morning and flew to Washington, D.C. and on to San Francisco where they met up with Janet and Jerry and their family. Together they boarded an American Airlines 707 for the flight to Honolulu.

Sheffield and Romona arrived at the airport a little before the plane landed and were waiting in the arrival area when the plane pulled up to the terminal. Excitement mounted while they waited for the passengers to begin unloading. A few minutes later, the door opened and the first passengers stepped through the hatch.

After several people filed out and down the stairs, they saw Edith. Right behind her was Gean, followed by the rest of the family. Janet was the last of the Brasons to come through the door. She had Andrea in her arms. Ramona's eyes welled up with tears as she became emotional at seeing Andrea for the very first time.

They didn't pay any more attention to who was coming out of the plane. Their eyes followed the three little families making there way down the stairs and across the tarmac. The emotion continued to build as it had been six months since they had seen them. Then all of a sudden, they were smothered by hugs. It was hard to say who was the most excited. The grandkids were full of wiggles that had to be let out after being cooped up in a plane for so long. They were all talking at once, clamoring for the attention of their grandparents. Andrea wasn't sure what to think when some woman she had never seen before snatched her from her mother's arms and began making a fuss over her.

Sheffield and Ramona kept kids occupied while their parents began collecting their luggage. With that many people coming for ten days, there was a lot of bags to collect and sort through. Then each family checked out their own rental car so they would have independence at coming and going. It took a while but eventually, the caravan followed Sheffield and Ramona out of the airport parking lot and began making their way downtown and onto the Pali Highway and on up the Nuuanu Valley to Mililani. Gean wanted to ride with Grandpa and Grandma. She took in the sites with wide eyes as they drove.

“Wow.” she said when they pulled into the driveway. “This is where you live?”

“That’s right.” Ramona assured her.

When the car came to a stop, Gean got out of the car and waited for the rest of her family as they came to a stop in the driveway. A moment later, all nine grandchildren were excitedly wandering around the grounds. The office staff Elders came out to serve as bell hops to help take their luggage upstairs.

The first item of business was lunch, as everyone was hungry. The staff and Sister missionaries had already been fed and Sister `Auli`i had cleared away and reset the table and had lunch ready to serve. The kids were rounded up and herded into the dining room and up to the table. The kids took a moment to settle down so a blessing could be offered. Over lunch, they told all about their day, thus far, and their flight. The conversation then turned to all of the things that were planned for the next several days.

The grandkids all seemed to have grown in the last six months. Two of them had birthdays since then. Of Craig and Edith's children Gean was now eleven, Geoff was nine, Todd was six, and Tina was four. Of Norma and Wade's children, Teresa was nine, Samantha was six, and Marty was three. Lastly, of Janet and Jerry's children Wesley was three, and Andrea was eighteen months.

Andrea quickly became accustomed to Grandpa and Grandma Brason. She particularly enjoyed the fuss that Grandma was making over her. It had taken her time to adjust to Janet and Jerry as it was, having come from foster care. She quickly learned that she was there for good and began to adapt to her new family. They really didn't know what her circumstances had been. The important thing was that she was theirs and the plan was to make that arrangement eternal during this trip.

Once lunch was over, everyone realized how tired they were and just how long the day had been already. The younger children were especially tired and it didn't take much to convince them to take a nap. Those who weren't napping were given a tour of Mililani and shown around the grounds.

The afternoon was spent unpacking and getting settled in. In order to have enough beds to go around, each couple were put up in the three spare bedrooms. Gean, Teresa, and Samantha were sent downstairs to the Sister missionaries' door room. They thought that was pretty cool. Geoff and Todd got the guest room. As for Tina, Marty, Wesley, and Andrea, mattresses and bedding had been borrowed from the barracks above garage and were set up on the floor in the rooms that their parents were in.

Because they had a late lunch, they opted out of having dinner at the mission home that evening. Instead, they caravanned downtown and went out for pizza. Then after dinner, they came back to Mililani to observe Christmas Eve.

Samantha became quite worried and couldn't contain her concern any longer. "Grandma, Grandpa." she said, "I don't see a fireplace anywhere. How's Santa going to get in?"

"That's a good question, Samantha." Sheffield replied. "You see, here in Hawaii, people don't have fireplaces in their houses, so Santa has worked out deal with them. They simply leave a door unlocked and he walks right in. I'll tell you what, why don't we leave the door to the balcony open tonight. He can set down his sleigh right out there and walk right in with his pack."

"Okay, Grandpa." she agreed, satisfied with the answer.

Before leaving Roanoke, the grandchildren had been practicing for the Christmas Eve program that they wanted to put on for their grandparents. Part of it was a Christmas pageant in which they depicted the Christmas story.

Dressed in bathrobes and bath towels, Geoff and Teresa, the twin cousins, were Joseph and Mary. Todd, Tina, Samantha, Marty, and Wesley were shepherds, Gean was the Angel, and at the last minute Andrea was substituted for the doll that was to have been the baby Jesus. She wasn't very cooperative, so the doll was reinstated in the roll. They acted out the parts while Norma read the Christmas story from Luke.

After the pageant, they lined up with the little ones in front, and the older ones behind them, they performed a number Christmas songs, including "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer", "Here Comes Santa Clause", and others. All of a sudden, Santa Clause himself burst through the door. Santa quickly handed each child a Tootsie Pop and was gone as quick as he appeared. The stunned children, even Gean who was in the fifth grade and beyond Santa, just stood there with their mouths open. All except for three year old Marty who jumped up and down, shouting, "Clause! Clause! Clause!" Even the grownups were taken back by the unexpected visit. Except for Sheffield who had arranged it. Dwight Galloway, his counselor in the mission presidency, moonlighted as Santa during the Christmas season and was able to stop by briefly between Christmas Eve appearances.

It wasn't until Santa left, that they came to their senses. Geoff shouted, "Rodolph!" and they all ran out onto the balcony to see if they could see Santa fly away in his sleigh, but he was gone in a flash. After that they were all wound up and were far from settling down. The goodies that Ramona had made that morning didn't help either.

Eventually, Ramona had to tell them, "Santa's elves are watching and they can't report to Santa that you're all in bed fast asleep. He won't come until he knows that you are."



That got their a attention. After having family prayer together, Ramona took the older girls downstairs and got them settled. The younger children had worn themselves out and they weren't hard to put to bed. Geoff and Todd on the other hand took longer. Finally, with all of the grandkids settled, Sheffield and Ramona and the kids and their spouses stayed up and visited a while longer as they listened to some of the stories that Sheffield and Ramona had to tell.

When they were certain that the kids were all asleep, the rest of the items that had been stashed away were placed under the Christmas tree. The last light in Mililani went out at twelve fifteen as Ramona climbed into bed with Sheffield.

At around four thirty in the morning, they awakened by Todd calling out, "Has Santa come yet?"

That was followed by Craig's voice responding with, "No. Go back to sleep."

All was quite until around six thirty when the same inquiry was made.

This time Ramona answered, "Yes he ha., but before you can come out, let me go downstairs and get the girls."

"She slipped on her robe and started down stairs, but first she poked her head into the other bedrooms to arouse the others. A few minutes later, with the girls just outside of the door to the apartment and the boys poised at the door of the guest room, Ramona announced, "All right you can come out now."

There was a mad dash to the Christmas tree where the gifts that Santa had left were under the tree along with all of the wrapped gifts. For Gean there were Midge and Allan to go with her Barbie and Ken. She also got the Barbie dorm room play set. Geoff got a GI Joe navy pilot complete with a jet fighter that looked like a Grumman Panther. All that Todd wanted was the Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots that he had seen in the TV commercials. He wasn't disappointed. And Tina got the Baby Pattaburp doll. It was sixteen inches tall and made of soft vinyl with a cloth body gently. When patted on her back several times the doll burped just like a real baby.

For Norma's kids, Teresa got an Easy Bake Oven by Kenner; Samantha got the adjustable clamp on roller skates that she wanted, so she could join her friends who all brought their roller skates to school for recess; and Marty got a Mighty Tonka Dump truck. And then Wesley got toy a tractor and hay baler by Ertl, just like the ones on the ranch. And as for Andrea, she got the Fisher Price Old Woman in a Shoe pull along toy.

But that wasn't all. After discovering the toys that Santa brought, they began in an orderly manner, as directed by Ramona, to open the wrapped gifts. They included clothes, books, games, more toys, and other things. The adults were included in the rotation which went around and around until all of the gifts were opened. Oh and there were lots of goodies too.

Sheffield and Ramona gave Craig and Edith, Norma and Wade, and Janet and Jerry each the same

thing, a night in a luxury suite at the Halekulani Hotel on Waikiki Beach and a night of babysitting. The reservations were for the following Monday night. She got a discount by booking the block of rooms for the same night, with the greatest discount on Monday, the hotel's least busy night.

While the kids were enjoying their presents and Sheffield, Craig, Wade, and Jerry were having a discussion, Ramona took Edith, Norma, and Janet downstairs to the kitchen to help Sister `Auli`i with Christmas dinner. They had given her the day off, but she insisted that, unlike the Hanamis, she had nowhere to go and wanted to come to work and fix dinner, besides the office staff and the Assistants didn't have anywhere to go for Christmas dinner either.

Sister `Auli`i had been preparing for the meal all week by making pies and rolls. The ham was precooked and only needed to be warmed up and the potatoes needed to be baked. Sister `Auli`i directed Norma and Janet to set the table while she had Ramona and Edith help her with other things that needed fixed. By one thirty, everything was ready and Ramona called upstairs and told Sheffield that dinner was ready and to bring everyone downstairs. Likewise she called out to the Assistants apartment for them and the office staff to come on over. The lady missionaries had been invited to spend the Christmas with a family in the ward.

Twenty four people crowded around the table, including one in a highchair that had been brought up from the storage room, which was about all that would fit. There were seventeen from the Brason Family, six missionaries, and Sister `Auli`i. Once everyone was seated, Sheffield himself asked the blessing before serving bowls and platters began to be passed around the table.

When dinner was over and ready to clean up, Sister `Auli`i pressed the men into service while she let the ladies go, since they had helped with the preparations. When the last of it had been put away, Sheffield handed an envelope to Sister `Auli`i.

She opened it to find a Christmas card inside. But then she got the shock of her life to find five crisp, new twenty dollar bills inside of the card that read, "Dear Sister `Auli`i. Thank you for all of your hard work that you do here for us and the missionaries. Your meals are always superb and are always exciting. You do so much for everyone around Mililani, so we'd like for you to go and do something special just for you. Love President and Sister Brason."

Tears proportioned to her size, streamed down her cheeks as she sobbed softly. "Nobody ain't never done nothin like that for me in all da 'leven years that I've worked here." she said through her sniffles.

"Thank you Pres'dent."

"No." he corrected, "Thank you, Sister `Auli`i. Now there's enough food here to last us through the weekend, why don't you take the rest of the day off."

"Thank you Pres'dent."

And then he added, "And tomorrow too, if you'd like. We've given the Hanamis the day off."

"Oh no, Pres'dent," she protested. "The mishnaries need fed. I'll be here as usual tomorrow."

The rest of the afternoon, the Brasons stayed close to home. They played games and visited some more. Later when the kids got to feeling cooped up, they went outside to romp around the grounds. After all, it was eighty one degrees. Towards, evening when everyone started to get a little hungry, they helped themselves to some of the left overs.

On Saturday, a special reunion was held as Takara and Teancum came down from Laie with their two children. It had been six years since she had seen Janet. Janet knew that she was expecting, but was surprised at how big she was at eight and half months. For such a tiny woman, she was all belly. Needless to say, she didn't feel much like going out, so they spent their time visiting at Mililani, while the children played. Chris was now five years old and Lelani was three, so they fit right in with the younger grandchildren.

While Janet and Takara were getting caught up, Ramona, Norma, and Edith assembled a picnic from the leftovers from Christmas dinner and brought it outside. With another day at eighty two degrees and a gentle breeze blowing off the ocean and up through the canyon, it was just another day in paradise. Everyone was content to stay at home that day, but anticipated everything that they had planned for the next week.

But first, on Sunday the Brasons invaded the Nuuanu Ward as they attended church. During the morning Sheffield was proud to introduce his son and two sons in law in Priesthood Meeting. When they went back to Sunday School, the already large junior Sunday School made room for eight more children while Andrea stayed with Janet. The leftovers from Christmas dinner became Sunday dinner. Then that evening, the Brasons displaced a couple of families from their usual seats as they took up two rows in the center of the chapel.

Monday morning, after Christmas and an enjoyable weekend, the vacation really got started. The first thing on the agenda was a day at the beach. Later in the morning, they all rode the bus down to Waikiki Beach and checked into the Halekulani Hotel. The luxury suites became changing rooms and everyone changed into their bathing suits and headed down to the beach. All except for Norma and Wade, who for some reason lagged behind and sent their kids down with Grandpa and Grandma.

"We'll catch up with you in a few minutes." they said as they shewed everyone out the door.

"Aren't they going to join us?" Sheffield asked Ramona as she headed down the stairs.

"Sure they are." Ramona assured him. "I think they have some business to attend to first."

"Oh." Sheffield said. "Don't you mean monkey business?"

“That’s exactly what I mean.”

Once down on the beach, the grandkids were especially anxious to play in the water. The adults set out their beach blankets and settled down to watch from a close distance. After a while Norma and Wade came strolling up, holding hands.

“Did you have a good time?” Ramona asked.

They didn’t answer the question, but the smiles on their faces did.

Rather than sit down to join them, Norma and Wade went straight for the water. The rest of them got up and followed. It was so refreshing. They all played and splashed and swam together in the shallow water. The three older kids, who were taller and knew how to swim, ventured out a little further. At one point Norma, Janet, and Edith climbed onto their husbands shoulders and went after each other in a free for all to see who would be the last one standing. Sheffield and Ramona who were left watching the little kids watched as they battled it out. Wade and Norma were the first to go down because she was too heavy for him to support her for very long. In the end, Craig and Edith won.

After awhile, the adults and the smaller children left the water and returned to their spot of beach. While they were visiting, all of a sudden Janet slugged Jerry in the shoulder.

“Ow!” What was that for?”

“I saw you watch those three women strut by in their bikinis.”

“I did not.” he protested.

She slugged him again and said, “That one is for lying.”

“I always said,” Sheffield’s interjected, “if you don’t look once, your not a man. If you look twice, well lets just say your character is in question. But the third time is just pure lust.”

“So Jerry,” Wade asked, “How many times did you look?”

Okay, okay.” He admitted. “I did look, but just once.”

“Me too.” Wade admitted. “What about you Craig?”

“I guess my character must be in question.”

“All right.” Sheffield said. “This conversation is getting a little out of hand. Sorry I mentioned it.”

About then, Geoff and Teresa came running toward them. “Grandpa.” they called. “Will you come and build a sand castle with us?”

“Sure.” he said as he got up. They each took him by one hand and led him over to a patch of wet sand. The two nine year olds dropped to there knees and began digging in the sand. With Sheffield’s bum leg, it took him just a moment to get down on his knees.

Sheffield looked at the the twin cousins as they intently began forming their castle. They still looked an awful lot a like, so much so that many times people who met them for the first time thought that they were

twins. They didn't know what to think when they found out that they were actually cousins born a few hours apart. They couldn't have been any closer if they were brother and sister. They did a lot together and had the same circle of friends.

Sheffield kept supplying them with damp sand as they continued to craft their master piece. As they worked together, Sheffield talked to them while down on their level. More importantly, he listened to them as they told him all about school and what was important to them.

Right in the middle of their conversation, Teresa looked up and said, "I miss you Grandpa."

"Well, I miss you too. I miss all of you. I'm so glad that you came to see us."

"Me too."

Before long, Gean wanted in on it and joined them. It wasn't much longer before the water began encroaching on their sand castle. Despite the inevitable, they continued working on it to add the finishing touches.

As it was washing away, wave by wave, Sheffield saw a teaching opportunity and said, "Now do you see why the scriptures say not to build upon a sandy foundation?"

After spending the day at the beach, Sheffield and Ramona took the grandkids back to Mililani with them. That evening the Craig and Edith, Norma and Wade, and Janet and Jerry went out together for dinner and took in a show before returning to the hotel.

On Tuesday morning Sheffield took the five older kids to the Honolulu Zoo and Waikiki Aquarium at Queen Kapiolani Park and treated them to lunch while Ramona entertained the four little ones at home. Their parents got back around noon, but Sheffield and the older kids didn't get back until around one thirty.

Richard and Connie Kaaloa came over from Kona early that day for the presidency meeting that night. That afternoon, they took the Brasons out on their tour boat for a three hour whale watching cruise. That time of the year the humpback whales migrate down from the frigid Northern Pacific to the warm water around Hawaii. So as not to disappoint paying costumers, Dick had installed sonar on his boat so he could find them more easily. If they were not to be found he broadcast a recording of whale songs to bring them closer. During the cruise they not only got a good look at several humpbacks up close, but also a school of dolphins and some manta rays that they passed through.

Wednesday was a special day. They began early and got ready and left Mililani early and caravaned up to Laie. Takara, even in her condition, and lolani were kind enough to take all of the grandchildren while Sheffield and Ramona and their children and their spouses attended the temple. It was the first time that they had the opportunity to do so together since Janet and Jerry were married. Then after the session, they were directed to one of sealing rooms were Andrea was brought in to be sealed to Janet and Jerry.

After the Temple, they changed their clothes and spent the rest of the day at the Polynesian Cultural

Center, including the luau in the evening. Even though Craig, Norma, and Janet had been to Hawaii before, it was before the Cultural Center had been built, so they had never been there before. That night they all stayed in Laie and came back to Mililani the next day by way of the the North Shore and Central Valley. After a day of touring the those parts of the Island, that night they celebrated New Years Eve and welcomed in 1965 with games and snacks.

The time was passing quickly and there was still so much they wanted to do. New Years day and Saturday was spent taking in as many of the sights and attractions as possible. Sheffield and Ramona wanted to instill in there children grandchildren the day that lived in infamy for the nation and their family and took them to the Arizona Memorial and retold the stories that had told countless times. This time, in that setting, it sunk in a little deeper. Sheffield stressed, "I don't ever want any of you to forget. For the rest of your lives, remember Pearl Harbor."

Some of the other places that they took them included the Iolani Palace, the Aloha Tower, the Nuuanu Cliffs, the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, and the Liliuokalani Botanical Gardens. Only once did a matter arise that was urgent enough to require Sheffield's attention, which was resolved fairly quickly. Other than that, he and Ramona devoted the entire week to spending with their family.

Then it was over. In order to be back to work and school on Monday, they had to say their goodbyes and saw them off at the airport on Sunday, all except for Janet, Wesley and Andrea. Jerry had to get back to the ranch as lambing season was about to get into full swing. But since their children weren't in school, they didn't have be back and could stay a while longer. With the rest of the family on their way home, Sheffield, Ramona, Janet, and her kids attended church.

\* \* \* \* \*

Decorating the mission home is purely hypothetical.

The Christmas pageant is based off the Christmas Eve of 1963 or 64 when my Goodfellow cousins came over and we put on a little program for our parents. Santa came just as described and it was my little sister jumping up and down. When Santa left, we all dashed to the window to see if we could see his sleigh. We didn't see it either.

All of the toys mentioned were either introduced in either 1963 or 1964, except for the roller skates and the Ertl farm set that had been around for years. The GI Joe pilot actually represented the Air Force.