

A FLOOD OF HAPPY MEMORIES

Because of old plumbing and an unsound foundation, my childhood home flooded whenever a storm produced enough rain. Because storms in Virginia, USA, can last for hours, water invaded frequently.

We lived in that home during most of my growing-up years, so I thought flooding was normal.

After several storms, we improved our flood-fighting tactics and learned to

work together. Storms often hit in the middle of the night, and my parents would wake us all up to work at our posts as the water encroached through the basement like slow-moving lava. My brother and father would bucket out the stairwell while my sister and I quickly sopped up water with towels to save the carpet.

We giggled as we jumped and danced on those towels, feeling the

squishy wetness between our toes and through our pajama legs. Mom hurriedly wrung out the drenched towels, hurled them into the dryer, and brought new ones fresh for stomping. When we were satisfied the house was safe, we went to the kitchen to dry off and enjoy hot cocoa and cookies for our labors. Then, if it wasn't yet time for school, we would try to go back to sleep.

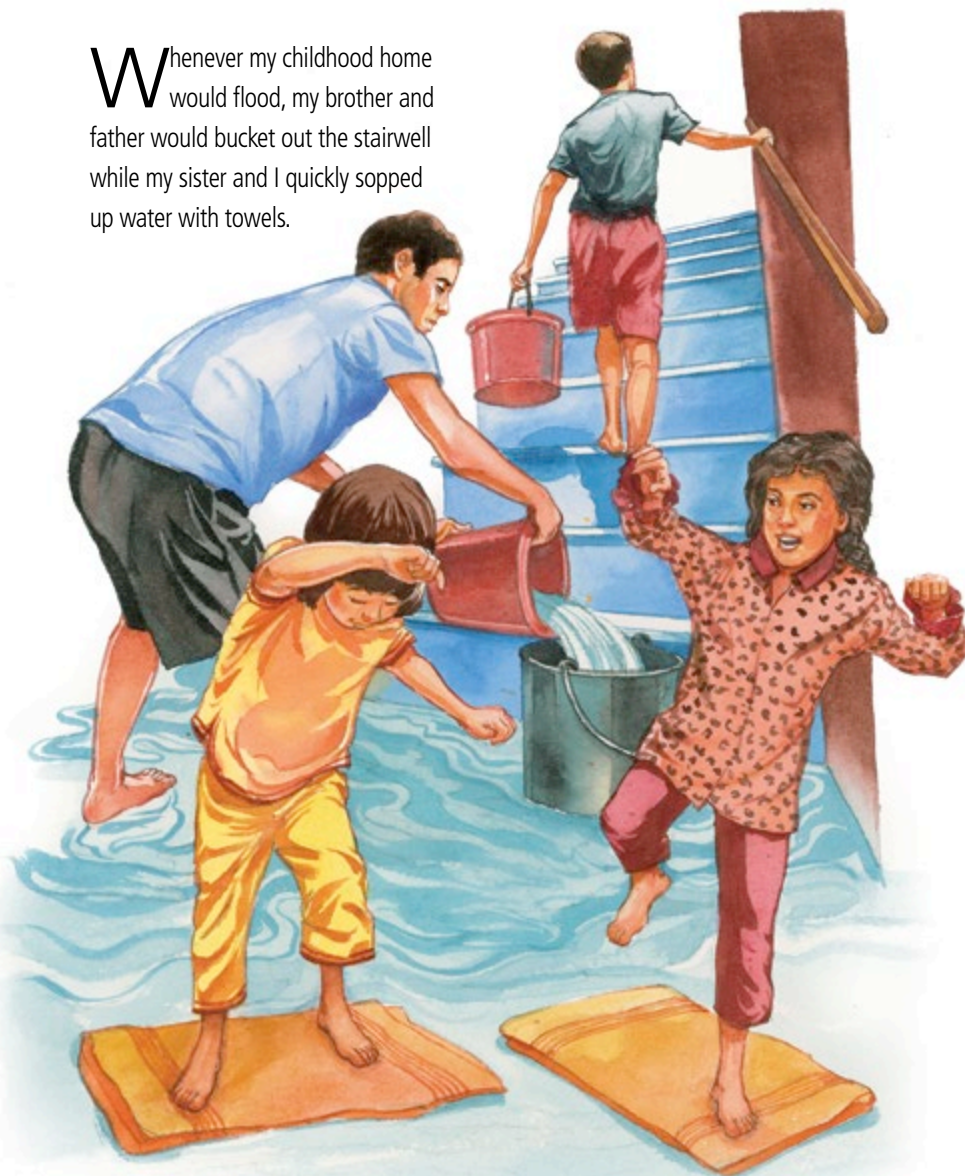
These floods must have given my parents great anxiety, but I remember them as some of the happiest moments of my childhood, even with the booming thunder and the flashing lightning. In fact, the smell of wet carpet still makes me nostalgic for family time.

My parents could have fought the flooding alone, but I'm so glad they employed all of us in defense of our home. Fighting the water was a joyous event because we were together and we each played a part.

Now that I am grown, I think about those days and wonder how I can create the same joy of working together in my own children. Though grateful that my home does not flood, I know that something unwanted will inevitably encroach upon our family.

No matter what trouble my family may deal with in the future, I hope we stay together and work together in defending our values, our faith, and each other. Then perhaps, even in adversity, we can laugh, smile, and feel happy as we labor side by side. ■

Gina Sconiers, Utah, USA



PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS GIVEN AND RETURNED

Some years ago while our family was eating dinner with another couple from our ward, we received a phone call from the emergency department of our local hospital. An official asked my husband, who was serving as stake president at the time, if someone from our Church could come see a 17-year-old youth who had suffered a serious head injury.

Upon arriving, my husband learned that the young man had fallen from a balcony onto a cement sidewalk 30 feet (9 m) below. He was unconscious and not expected to live.

My husband and the brother who ate dinner with us gave the young man a blessing. His family, who lived a thousand miles (1,610 km) away, was contacted and apprised of his condition.

Miraculously, after a few days of intensive care, the young man regained consciousness and began to heal. For four weeks his parents visited him daily in the hospital. Then they flew him home to Arizona, USA, so he could complete his recovery.

How marvelous it was to witness the healing power of the priesthood work in a way to give this young man a second chance at a healthy future. And how grateful I was for a husband and other ward members who are prepared to perform priesthood service and act with divine authority.

I felt deeply for the young man's parents, who were so far from their son

during his crisis. I was glad, however, to know that they felt somewhat reassured when they learned that their son had received a priesthood blessing and that Church members were glad to help.

My empathy for those parents greatly increased a few years later when I received a phone call informing me that my own son, living 2,000 miles (3,220 km) away, had been hit by a car while riding his bicycle to the university where he was working and studying. Though I felt powerless to help him, I was thankful and comforted to know that the full-time missionaries were called to give him a priesthood blessing and that a ward in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, had responded to his family's needs. Ward members brought meals to his home and helped his wife, who had given birth just the day before the accident, care for their other three children.

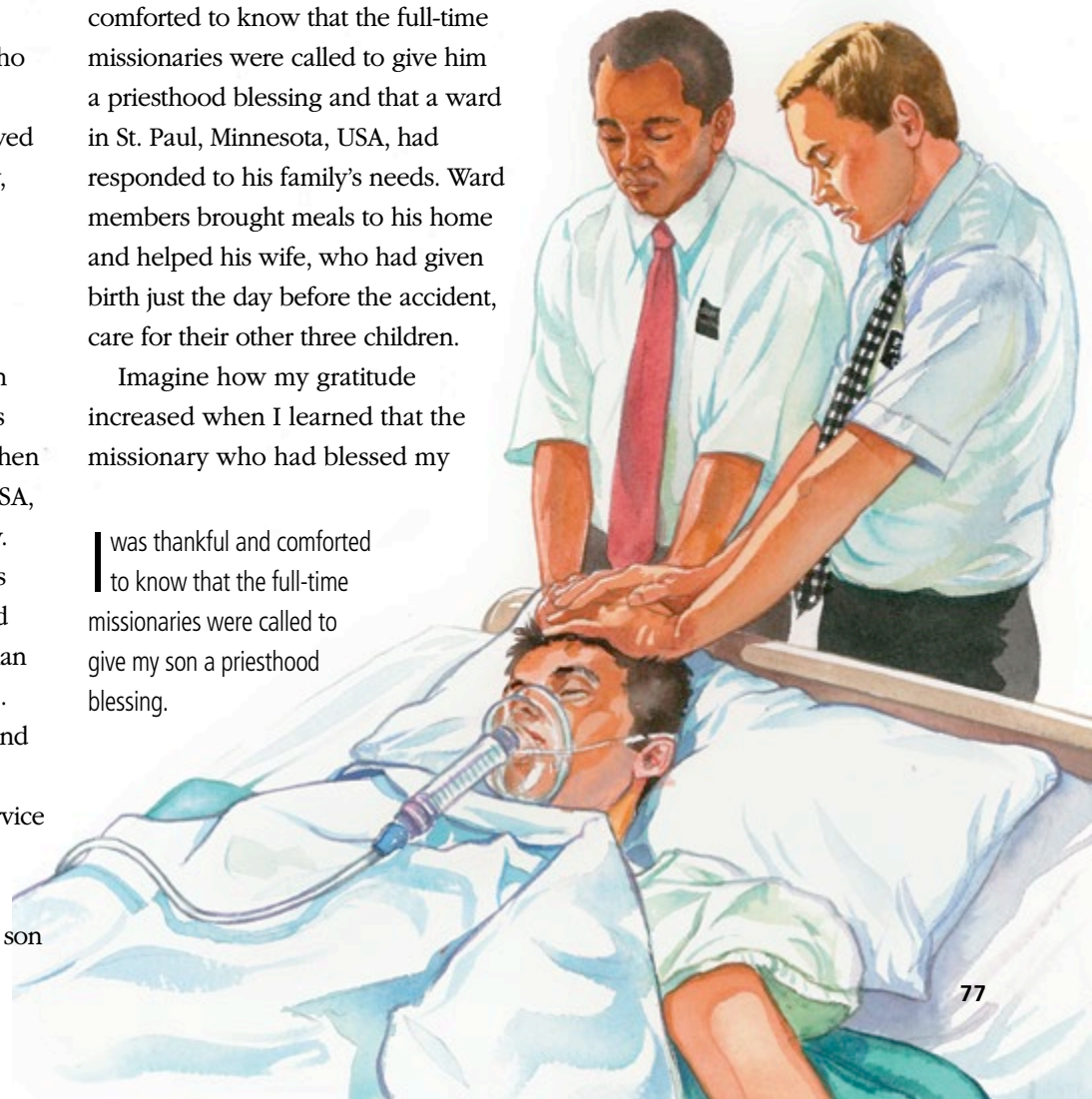
Imagine how my gratitude increased when I learned that the missionary who had blessed my

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son was the same young man who had received a blessing from my husband five years before. I was amazed that the service given had returned in full measure!

My faith in and prayers of gratitude to my loving Heavenly Father have continued to increase as I contemplate that He knows all of us and what we will need. I believe that this young missionary was there so we could see the foreknowledge of God in a very personal way. ■

Julie Keyes, British Columbia, Canada



I KNEW GOD WOULD PROVIDE

Before I joined the Church, my husband became seriously ill. I prayed hard, asking God to let my husband live for the sake of our five children and the baby I was expecting. But my prayers were in vain.

When my husband died, my love for God and my faith and trust in Him died as well. I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities now on my shoulders. Fortunately, my parents were there to help.

One day a few years later, I heard a knock at my door. Two strangers stood there with friendly smiles and a book in their hands. They introduced themselves as missionaries from The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had never heard of their church. They left when I told them I was busy, but I continued to think about them.

The next day I saw them showing their book to a neighbor. Curious, I came closer. The missionaries noticed me and asked again if they could visit me. I was surprised by my answer: “Yes, anytime!”

As I listened to the missionary lessons and studied the Book of Mormon, I realized the mistakes I had made in life, repented of my sins, and grew closer to God. When my parents heard that the elders were teaching

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me, however, they were upset. They threatened to disown my children and me. The missionaries invited me to be baptized, but I refused because we couldn’t live without my parents’ help.

Before the elders left, they asked me to read 3 Nephi 13:31–34. When I read “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (verse 33), I knew that Heavenly Father would provide if I put Him first and obeyed His commandments. When the missionaries returned, we scheduled my baptism.

The day of my baptism, my mother’s angry voice flashed into my mind. I was nervous, but I entered the water and was baptized. Afterward I was so happy, and when I was confirmed a member of the Church and given the gift of the Holy Ghost, I felt that my burdens had been lifted.

When my parents heard that I had joined the Church, they disowned me. But we reconciled a year later, after which my two sisters were baptized with our parents’ consent.

Three of my children eventually served full-time missions, and soon I will celebrate 40 years as a member of the Church. What great blessings I have—all thanks to two missionaries who knocked on my door, introduced me to the Book of Mormon, and helped restore my love for God and my faith and trust in Him. ■

Abethemia Trujillo, Albay, Philippines



WHAT WOULD I SING?

During my service as a full-time missionary nearly 40 years ago in the town of Levin, New Zealand, I played the piano each Tuesday for the Primary children. I remember well the wonderful feelings I had for these children as we sang together the gospel-rich Primary songs.

In February 2013, I returned to New Zealand on vacation. Being an avid hiker, I booked a four-day hiking excursion of the famous Milford Track in Fiordland National Park on the South Island.

I was joined by three Americans and 37 other hikers from around the world, including Australia, Brazil, England, Finland, Germany, Israel, and Uruguay. During our adventure, we shared thoughts, experiences, and opinions as best we could given our language barriers. It didn't take long for our cultural differences and preconceived opinions to melt away under our growing bonds.

At the end of our third day of hiking, one of the hikers wanted to build upon

our growing friendships and sprang to his feet, announcing that we should hold a talent show. He said he would begin the show. He chose to share his storytelling talent, which he had been practicing at his business office in Caesarea, Israel. His story went well, so he announced that he would tell another one. But as he shared some off-color remarks, I realized that the evening could easily turn out to be something less than uplifting.

During his story, I felt a strong impression to sing for the group. But what would I sing to my newfound friends from all over the world? The answer came to me forcefully: "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301).

I was anxious but drew upon my memories of and love for the Primary children of New Zealand. I rose to my feet and explained that I would sing a special song that I had sung nearly 40 years ago with children in New Zealand. I explained that I had been a missionary, had taught these children, and had grown to love them. I then said

a silent prayer, asking for help to sing in a manner that would bless the group.

The song went well, and afterward I could feel the Spirit. My new friends smiled, and the song seemed to open their hearts. It wasn't long before others rose and began sharing their musical talents. A group of four ladies, previously reluctant to participate, sang selections from their church choir. Another hiker taught us a Jewish folk song.

At the end of the talent show, a beautiful young woman from Australia sang three songs in Maori, her native tongue. Truly the Spirit of our Heavenly Father had distilled upon us and helped us realize that we were all children of God, not just "strangers and foreigners" (Ephesians 2:19) from various lands.

I am thankful for those Primary children in the small town of Levin who helped instill in me the truth that we are all children of our Heavenly Father. I am also glad those memories gave me the courage to share that testimony through song. ■

David M. Flitton, Utah, USA

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