



A TEMPLE FOR Kona

By R. Val Johnson
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Leroy Alip listened intently as he was set apart to serve on a stake high council on the Big Island of Hawaii. In the blessing, Brother Alip was told he would be on the island when a temple was built there and that he would serve in that temple. This was in 1984, and the only temple in Hawaii was on the island of Oahu, over 200 miles (330 km) away by boat or plane.

The priesthood blessing energized Brother Alip. “I believe that when you are given a blessing, you have a responsibility to do whatever you can to bring that blessing to you,” he says. So he and his wife, Rose, decided to attend the temple on Oahu once a month.

Doing so was not easy. Traveling there cost U.S. \$300, a lot of money for a couple barely getting by on Brother Alip’s paycheck from the government office where he worked. The only way they could make the trip was to dip into their savings. They did so gladly.

Within a year, however, they were out of money. “But our hearts were in the temple,” Brother Alip says. “We wanted to continue attending. So we prayed for help.”

Not long afterwards, Brother Alip unexpectedly

received an offer to supplement his income by delivering papers for a local business. For these early morning deliveries, he was paid nearly \$700 per month. With more than enough money to continue going to the temple, Brother and Sister Alip were prompted to put the surplus in their own special temple fund.

By June 1986 the reason for that prompting became clear: now living in the Kona Hawaii Stake, they could take a number of women from the stake to the temple who were worthy but had not been able to receive their endowments. So each month, the Alips took one sister with them to Oahu. Each time, the sister returned to bear testimony of the spiritual power and joy she felt in doing her own and others’ temple work. Soon, the spirit of temple work spread throughout the stake, and more members began looking for ways to attend the temple.

Through contacts Brother Alip had in the travel industry, he was able to arrange for discounted airfare, ground transportation, and lodging for all in the stake who wanted to go. By 1994 more than 100 members of the Kona stake were making the monthly trip to the Laie Hawaii Temple.



Brother Alip laughs. He recalls, “The temple president joked that the Saints from Kona were wearing out the carpets because so many of them were in the temple.”

In 1997 President Gordon B. Hinckley announced a new direction for temple construction. Building smaller temples would enable more temples to be built. The faithfulness of the Saints on the Big Island was rewarded six months later when President Hinckley announced a temple for Kona. After the temple was dedicated in 2000, Brother Alip was called as second counselor in the temple presidency. Today, fully retired from his career and fully engaged in the work of the Lord, he supervises the workers who keep the grounds of the Kona Hawaii Temple beautiful.

Brother and Sister Alip are grateful for the ways Heavenly Father has blessed them to have what they need to continue serving others. When they first came to Kona, Brother Alip says, “We had no place to stay except for a small shack in the hills built for a worker in the coffee fields.” They lived there for months until they were able to rent a small cottage.

A number of years later, they had enough savings and income to consider a nicer home, but nothing they looked at felt right to them. One

When Leroy and Rose Alip decided to sacrifice to attend the temple monthly, the Lord blessed them beyond their means to go—and to take others with them.

day while Brother Alip was working on the Kona temple grounds, an elderly sister came by. She was crying. “She was being evicted from her home and had no place to go,” Brother Alip says. “For some reason, I told her to go visit her grandchildren, and when she returned, she could move in with us.” The problem was, the Alips’ home was big enough for only Brother and Sister Alip. So they started praying—and looking earnestly for ways to obtain the blessing they sought.

Shortly, a real-estate agent invited them to consider a two-story home with six bedrooms. They loved it, but they assumed the house would cost more than they could afford. Reluctantly, they turned the offer down.

But a way opened up. Within a few weeks, the price of the home dropped, and the Alips learned they had sufficient credit to buy the house. As a result, the sister in need had a place with Brother and Sister Alip when she returned to Kona, and three of the Alips’ children, in need themselves, found shelter for their families at the house, too.

“The Lord has taken good care of us,” Brother Alip says. “When we show that we are willing to sacrifice our time, talents, and means for Him, He showers us with His tender mercies.” ■



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