

A LOVING MOTHER'S LIFE MISSION

By Peiholani Kauvaka



Above: The author's father, Moses, mother, Lavinia, and niece on the Los Angeles California Temple grounds in 1999.

When I was growing up in Tonga, my mother occasionally helped teach seminary. From the time I was 5 until I was 10, she would often wake me up before seminary and lead me to the house where the class met. Although it was less than a quarter of a mile (0.4 km) walk on the trail through the guava bushes, she would ask me, "Are you afraid?" I would bravely answer, "No."

Then she would say, "Someday you must be brave and serve your Heavenly Father. He has provided all things for us, even a plan that we can return to live with Him. Someday you will go on a mission and serve Him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. You must start preparing now to be a good missionary."

Eventually my parents moved our family to Ontario, California, USA. My mother found herself in an unfamiliar country, unable to speak the language and in culture shock. Like a hen that gathers her chicks under her wings, she would gather all of us children and fall to her knees, pleading to Heavenly Father that none of the children He had given her would fall away from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My parents used family prayer, daily scripture reading, regular family fasts, weekly family home evening, and Church meetings to seek Heavenly Father's help in fortifying our family.

My parents encouraged us to behave like missionaries early in life. We always wore white shirts to church and had missionary haircuts. As a priest I would bless the sacrament, and my younger brothers would prepare and pass the sacrament as teachers and deacons. I could see my mother and father watching us, making sure we completed our duties faithfully.

Before I left on my mission, my mother said, "Do your part, and I will do mine. I will fast and pray for you to find people to teach." She continued fasting and praying for all four of her sons during their missions. We all served faithfully and returned home with honor.

During my last visit with her before her death, my mother said, "Peiholani, I have taught you all that I know to be most important in this life and the life to come. That is, the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. The atoning blood of Jesus Christ is salvation to your soul. Honor the covenants you have made with the Lord in the temple. Do this, and our family will be together again. This I know without a doubt because Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live."

My testimony was built on the gospel, by every word my mother and father said. I know that our family will be together again someday because my parents fulfilled their mission to teach us the gospel and lead us to the Savior. ■