

My name is Elmo Rasmussen and I am 85 years old and my memory is beginning to slip and there is something that has been nagging me that I should get this done. Maybe I am feeling my own mortality. It is things that have happened to me that have meant a lot to me and I would like to get them down while I can still remember them. I have never kept a journal so I would like to leave something of me to my children and to my wife. I wouldn't want them to forget me and I know from experience with my folks that time dims the memories and I wished that my folks had left me something written that I could have maybe read that would have given me more insight into their feelings on religion and other things in their lives.

I have a strong testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ but I don't know if I have actually stood right up and bore that to my children. I hope that what we write here today, that sometime as they read it, it may have an influence on their lives and give them the realization that what we have in our church, in the Priesthood and the power of prayer and that our Heavenly Father still works miracles among his children here on Earth. I have read the Book of Mormon and the Bible three or four times both in English and in Danish. I have a pretty good knowledge of our religion and I know that in the not too distant future I will stand before my Heavenly Father and all the good and all the bad that I have done will be laid out before us and I hope that the good will counteract some of the bad, and if not I have faith that the atoning sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ will take over. That I will be privileged to have my wife and family in the next world.

The thing that I am going to tell you about happened in Denmark while I was on my mission. I had just got out of the Army where I had volunteered. I didn't volunteer because I was any big hero, but I volunteered because my wife was about to have an expensive operation and I knew if I was in the Army the government would pay for the operation. I had just been out of the Army, I'm not sure how long, but evidently the Korean War was just starting because the draft was still in progress. At that time the government had put a limit on the number of young men that the Church could get deferred to go on missions. I had been ordained a Seventy and at around that time they had a Stake Conference, one of the old ones where you had two hours in the morning, then you went home for two hours, and two hours in the afternoon. During the morning session, President Milton R. Hunter of the Seventies was there and he stood up and said, "I want to interview two Seventies for a full-time mission between meetings." I never thought much about it until I was home eating dinner and saw the Bishop pull up outside and I knew I was in trouble. I had never ever turned down a calling in the church. Me and my wife talked it over and told the Bishop we would let him know between meetings. We decided that I would volunteer to fulfill a full-time mission. Of course, he got us up in afternoon meeting to make a little speech and a big fuss, but I don't think I realized what I had done. He said that you will be getting your call in two or three weeks. He said do you have any

preference where to go and I said my ancestors came from Denmark, maybe I should go over there. Do you realize that that is a two and a half year mission instead of a two-year? I said if I can handle it for two years, I can surely handle it another six months. In about three weeks I got a greeting from the President of the church telling me that I had been called to fill a two and a half year mission in Denmark. I had just gotten home from the Army not too many years and had just gotten my married life straightened up and getting ourselves into a position to make a decent living. I had a contract feeding out purebred bulls for Chick Bedke and when he sold them I got a commission and that was the first real money I had made in my life. I owned a little farm, we had bought some cattle. I bought a new truck and some haying equipment. At that time the farmers had just started baling their hay, so I got a truck and a loader and started to hauling baled hay. I was ambitious and working hard and starting to make a little progress financially. When the call came, the Bishop met with me and he said how are you going to handle this financially? My wife and I talked it over and if I was going to fill a mission I would support myself so that we would get all the blessings. It was a \$300 a month mission and all the stuff I got from Salt Lake told me what I had to take. At that time the missionaries had to take all their clothes with them the whole length of time. I got busy. They said they will give you two months to get your business lined up and together. Immediately I had a contract to deliver a lot of hay. I got it done to make a few dollars and then we rounded up all of our cattle, we sold everything we had, we sold all of our farm machinery, we sold our trucks and hay loaders until we were right back to where we started from. It figured out if I was really careful and my wife got a job to support herself and her family we could just about pay for my mission.

So when it came time to leave on my mission I went to Salt Lake and we went by train and boat in them days. I got on the train and I didn't have any money to buy anything to eat with so I took enough sandwiches from home to do me for the three days on the train. When we landed in New York, I remember the Colonel came to visit me. He was stationed around there someplace and he took me out to supper that night and the next day there was eight of us missionaries going to Denmark and Sweden.

We got on a bus and went down to the pier where we got on the Stockholm. It was a Swedish passenger ship, a beautiful all white ship. I was standing on the pier on the deck of the ship and it started pulling out of the pier. I think it was really the first time it hit me what was going to happen. I was leaving home with everybody I knew and going to a land for two and a half years that I couldn't even speak the language to order anything to eat. It was before the time of MTC so we went over. You left to go over there knowing absolutely nothing about the language. We spent 15 days on the boat. The first night out the dining room was so crowded they had to make two seatings. The second night out we ran into a bad storm and there were so many people seasick that half the seating was not taken up in the dining room. I have never been seasick crossing both oceans.

We were on the boat for 15 days. We had a little Swedish boy for our room steward and he really took good care of us. We always had fresh fruit, anything we wanted to eat or drink day or night. He made our beds and all we did was tip him any amount we felt we should when we got off. We met a man on the boat that was coming from the United States that had lived in Denmark and was going back, so we got a little insight as to what it would be like.

When we landed over there and got to the mission home, that was the first time I realized exactly how the actions of people could influence the church. When the mission president interviewed us he stressed to us, "I want to stress to you very sternly that when you administer and bless somebody be sure you know where your prompting is coming from before you promise them anything and that it is not your own sympathy you feel for the people." He said we just had a very bad incident here in the Danish mission that has caused a lot of bad reflection on the church. He didn't tell us what it was, but I was talking to a missionary later and this is what he told me. It seemed like there was a young couple that was very active in the church and a few years ago the woman had had a baby and during having a baby she had had an epidural and it had left her paralyzed from the waist down. She had been wheelchair bound for probably three or four years. A couple of missionaries got a hold of her and at that time they were having a conference in Denmark and it is such a little country that all the missionaries, all the church members, and investigators from all over the island came to Denmark for conference. This missionary had gotten a hold of this woman and they told her that if she would be willing during the conference when the spirit of the Lord was its very thickest, they would wheel her in in a wheelchair at the end of the first session of conference and give her a blessing and heal her from her affliction, make her so she could walk.

That is exactly what happened. The missionaries wheeled her to the front of the congregation. One of the missionaries anointed her and the other gave her a blessing, and just like in the Bible when Christ said to arise and be whole, this missionary grabbed a hold of her and said, "I command you stand up" and grabbed her by the hands and jerked her up on her feet. Of course the minute he let go she fell back down and you can imagine the heydays of the Lutheran priests and the non-believers. The Mormons were not very well liked anyway. The propaganda that they come out against the church, the fun that they made. Little did I know when the mission president was telling me to be careful about who we administered to and what we promised, that two years from then I would have that really turned back in my face.

As it happened, me and my companion were tracting in a high-rise apartment complex in a town of Odessa. I was a senior elder and we spent about seven or eight hours tracting because in those days you never had referrals or help from church members. We spent many hours tracting. This day we had been tracting in this apartment building and had nothing but doors slammed in our face until my junior companion said, "Elder, I believe it would be easier to kill them and do work for the dead." We just came out of this apartment and we met a lady in a

white uniform. She was evidently a nurse, she said she was a nurse. She was a nurse to a young lady upstairs. She asked us if we were ministers. I said, "Well we are missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and we have the authority from Jesus Christ to act as ministers." I said what do you want. She said I am a nurse to a young lady upstairs and she has been watching you and she asked me to come down and get you and see if you would come up and pray over her. It was so seldom that anybody wanted us to come and even talk to them that it was really a surprise. I said we would be glad to. I said we could go up right now. We followed her upstairs and as she opened the door she said I want to warn you your are going to see something that will be very hard maybe for you to understand. She said this young lady had started being sick four years ago and just steadily kept getting worse. She says she has been to every good doctor in Denmark and Sweden. She has had Lutheran priests come in and pray over her a dozen times and the last time she was at the doctor they told her that there was nothing they could do for her, to go home and in a short while she would lose her mind and probably die because of the pain that she was in. She had a little four year old son and she had sent him to Norway to live with his grandparents.

We went into the room and this young woman was laying on a hospital bed by the window. As we got over by her, I had been in the Army for a long time and seen some quite terrible things, but nothing could have prepared me to look at this young lady. She said in a voice that I could just barely hear, would you pray over me. As soon as I got the lump out of my throat and the tears out of my eyes I told her that I would be glad to. If you wonder what she looked like, on her forehead and on her cheekbones, wherever the hide was close to the bone, it had split open. You could see the bones on her forehead, you could see the bones on her cheeks, on her hands the flesh had split open. You could see the bones on her arms and when I knelt down by the side of her bed and took her little hand in mine it just felt like a piece of petrified wood or something with absolutely no give to it, no moisture to it. When she asked me if I would pray for her, I said do you believe in a supreme being and she said yes I believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ. I said you probably read in the Bible that when he was here on Earth he went about healing people, giving people blessings, raising them from the dead. She said yes. I said when he was here on earth he gave his same power to some men that he called his twelve apostles and we call it the priesthood and I said I can trace my priesthood back from my time to Jesus Christ himself. I said we claim to have the same authority as his apostles did while they were here on earth. I said do you believe that. She said I haven't any reason not to. I said do you remember in the Bible where the apostles tried to cast the devil out of a person and they couldn't do it and they went to the savior and they said why can't we do this, we've seen you do it, he said these kind only come out through fasting and prayer. Then I remembered what the mission president had told me and I knew that the emotional condition I was in that I was in no shape to give that day the kind of blessing that she deserved. I said I will give you a blessing, I will pray for you now and ask Father in Heaven to help you to relieve the pain that you are

experiencing at this time and then I said we would like to go and fast for 48 hours and try to learn the will of the Lord concerning what we should tell you.

When we left there I immediately told the mission president in Copenhagen and told him what was taking place and that we were going to hold a 48 hour fast and I asked him at the end of this would you come help me administer to this young lady. He was the kind of man that made you believe that if he asked Heavenly Father to move a mountain, that a mountain would be moved out of his place. I had that much faith in him. I knew if I could get him to come and give this young lady a blessing that the Lord would take care of it. He said Elder Rasmussen I will not only come and help you administer to her but all of us here in the mission office will fast and I will get word to all the district presidents in all of Denmark and tell them what is up and have all the mission in Denmark fast for 48 hours and pray with you. At the end of this 48 hours we will come and administer to that young lady. It took a great weight off of my mind because I was the senior elder to know that he was going to take that responsibility. When the 48 hours was up, I met him at a train depot and we went to this place, him and my companion and I and I told him a little bit what to expect and when we got to this house, we went up to the room. I could see that he was effected emotionally about like the rest of us. He had been a dairy farmer in Salt Lake and he was an old man when he was called to be mission president, but when he was a young man he was in Norway and learned the Norwegian language and he had only been in Denmark just a short length of time so his Danish wasn't very good, so he spoke a little Danish, a little Norwegian and a little English and he always told people if you want you can understand me. So I anointed this young lady with oil and then he knelt down by her bed and laid his hands on her and gave her a blessing. I don't remember everything he said in his blessing but I remember this, he said Father in Heaven we are your servants here in Denmark, we hold your holy priesthood and it is our opinion that this lady has suffered long enough and should be healed. I think before he even got done praying it looked like this young lady had gone to sleep. She had such a peaceful look on her face. We left there and me and him and my companion went out to supper and broke our fast and when I left I told the nurse that we would be back in a day or two and meet with you again.

So in a couple of days, me and my companion went back and when we opened the door and the nurse met us, we knew that something good had happened. She said elders you won't believe it. We went in and the young lady was still in bed. She was so weak she probably hadn't been able to take any nourishment in months. She was really weak, but on her face and forehead where the big cracks had been, all you could see was a little tiny red line. The meat on her hands and arms had closed up and as I touched her hands it was just as soft and smooth as baby skin. The nurse told us that she had already sent to Norway to have her son come home and you could imagine how grateful that young woman was. I was transferred out of that district just about then and I never did get a chance to go back but I heard from the other missionaries that her son had come home, that she was investigating the church and it looked like a sure thing that she would

become a member. That had to be a miracle in the truest sense of the word, there is no way you could talk yourself out of that.

The other thing I wanted to tell you about, my companion and I was tracting in a little town called Orhuse. We went back to our room that night and I saw a letter from the mission office and that generally meant a transfer or getting chewed out about something, so I was hesitant to open it. When I did there was the membership of a young lady in it with her address and the note said that this young lady used to live in Orhuse, was a good church member, then she married a farmer and moved and the church had lost all contact with her and they told us to hunt up this address to go find her, see what her feelings were towards the church, give her whatever encouragement we could if she was having religious problems. The address was about 20 miles out. Now to give you a little background before this, during the World War II, Germany had occupied Denmark, sent a bunch of soldiers there and the soldiers had just drove the farms crazy stealing their pigs, calves, anything they could eat until the farms all got desperate and they sent to Sweden to a company that trained guard dogs. They shipped a bunch of those guard dogs to Denmark and if you know about how the buildings in Denmark are, out of the farms the buildings are built in a square. There is the house, the cow barn, the machine sheds, the pig pens, the storage bins and all were built in a big square and the only opening was a big high cement wall with a big heavy gate. Inside that was a courtyard where they worked on the machinery, where they parked the machinery, where they done everything. When they sent for these guard dogs they would keep them in a kennel during the day and turn them loose in the courtyard during the night. We heard rumors that the last thing that those German soldiers seen in this life was a big ugly animal that hurled towards them before it killed them. It hadn't been that long since the war and we were warned when we went tracting to be careful of these guard dogs, that there might be some around. They said these farms had chased missionaries with pitchforks, threw things at them and wouldn't be above turning the dogs loose on them and when you are out tracting keep that in mind.

The next day we jumped on our bicycles, it was a beautiful day and we had to pedal out 20 miles to where this address was. When we got there the house was set down in the field about a quarter of a mile or so off the main road and so we started down in there and just as we got started down in we seen what it looked like, a big dog was standing out there. We began to fear and tremble a little right then but we had come that far and we would at least make an attempt. As we got a little closer we could see that the dog was on a long chain tied to a peg driven into the ground. The nearer we got the more nervous the dog got, trotting around and around in a circle and where he had been trotting around all these years he had a nice path worn. This house was off to the side and all these buildings was on the other side of the gate and they had this dog tied so he could guard the house and the gate going into the yard. The nearer we got the more nervous that dog got. These dogs were big dogs, they were not as tall as a great dane and they had real heavy shoulders and a big vicious looking mouth. As we got a little nearer that dog really got nervous and I said well let's holler and see if we can

raise anyone out of the house. When we hollered that dog went insane. He would back up as far as he could and run at us as hard as he could against the chain and it would jerk him backwards. He was bleeding at the muzzle where he hit his face on the ground when he went over and he kept doing that. One of us said what do you think would happen if that chain broke. Just about the second time he hit the chain after we said that the chain broke. The dog had been hitting that chain and was so surprised that he almost lit right at our feet. He looked like there was about eight feet of chain around his neck hanging behind him and this old boy meant business. He crouched down on his hind legs and was just ready to spring at us and do us in when the chain raised up off off the ground just about as high as a man's belt would be and it became tight and it jerked that dog around facing whatever it was and his back to us. I don't know what that dog saw, but his tail dropped between his legs, his ears went down, he slunk down like he was scared to death and in a minute he started down across the field and something was running beside him beating him over and under and he was crying at the top of his voice. My companion and I checked each other out to see if we had seen a hand pick up that chain. We wanted to say that we did, but we didn't, but we know that there was some kind of an immortal human being that picked that chain up and jerked the dog around and when the dog seen him that is when it really put the fright in him. It turned out the lady wasn't home and when we got home that night you can bet we knelt down and thanked our Heavenly Father that we were still alive. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that dog would have killed one or both of us. To me that was another miracle.

Those things have stayed with me all my life. There is jut one more little thing I would like to mention.

We were out tracting one day and knocked on a door and an old lady opened the door. It turned out she was 80 years old and I spoke to her and told her who we were. In Denmark they have two languages, the people out in the country can't understand the people in the city and the people in the city can't understand the others. This old lady lived in the country and spoke the country language. When I talked to her she broke into a smile and said come on in. She says I have had missionaries for 20 years and you are the first one I have been able to understand. I guess I spoke such poor Danish maybe I talked the same language she did. She said I have read all the literature, I want to be baptized, I was just waiting for someone to come that I could understand and that could understand me and I could tell them what I wanted. I said I will make arrangements and I will be happy to baptize you. Before that she had two daughters and they came to me and said you are out of your mind. Our mother can't even stand to have her head washed. We have to chemical clean her hair. We can't even wash her head. She immediately comes down with some kind of a bad disease. She said if you go ahead and do this and mother dies we are going to hold you accountable for that. I said don't worry I will give your mother a blessing before I baptize her and the Lord will see that nothing happens to her. I went and we held the baptism and I baptized her and confirmed her and she never suffered the least bit of illness.

Her daughters even admitted that there must be something to it that she could be immersed in water and not suffered any ill effects.

I think I will sign off. I might come back, I have other things I want to tell, I might want to have transcribed a little more what I should have been keeping in a diary a little about my life that maybe my kids might be interested in.

I want to bear my witness that I know these things are true and I have seen the Lord's hand in all of these things. I do it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.