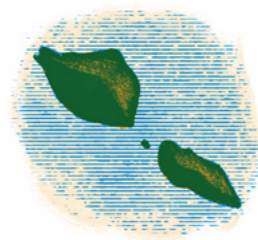


TOM AND THE TERRIBLE FLU

By Lucy Stevenson Ewell

Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)



Samoa is a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean.



A traditional house in Samoa, called a *fale*, has no walls.



Today there is one temple in Samoa.

"Here you go, *Tamā* (Dad)," Tom said softly. Tom's father slowly sat up on his sleeping mat. Tom helped him sip some fresh coconut juice.

Tamā and the rest of Tom's family had been sick for days. Almost everyone else in the village was sick too. A pandemic had come to the island—the Spanish flu.

Tom walked outside. He was one of the only people who was well enough to take care of the others. And many families needed help.

I need more coconut juice, Tom thought. He climbed up a tall coconut tree. When he got to the top, he picked some coconuts and tossed them to the ground.

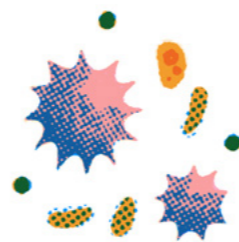
As he climbed down, Tom thought about the people in his village. It was scary to see so many of them sick.

A year earlier, Tom's little brother, Ailama, got sick. That was scary too. Tom and his family prayed for him to get better.

Then *Tamā* had a special dream. The dream showed him how to help Ailama get better—by pounding bark from a *wiliwili* tree to get the juice. Tom helped *Tamā* take care of Ailama, and they gave him juice from the tree. And Ailama did get better!

Tom knew God had helped them then. And he knew God would help them now.

Tom cut the coconuts open. The sweet smell of coconut juice made him feel a little better. He walked to the next house in the village to share some juice with his



The Spanish flu pandemic reached Samoa in 1918.



Tom was 12 years old when the pandemic started.



Tom's village, Sauniatu, was built by a group of Latter-day Saints.

Tom knew God would help them.



neighbors. Then he went to the next house. And the next.

Weeks passed. Each day Tom worked hard to take care of everyone. He caught chickens so he could make warm soup to share. He carried buckets of water from the spring for people to drink.

Some of the people in the village died. *Tamā* died too. It was really hard for Tom. The whole village was sad. But through it all, Tom remembered that God loved him and would help him.

Tom didn't stop helping people. And after a while, people started to get better!

Eventually the flu pandemic ended. People stopped getting sick. Tom and Ailama were even able to go to school again. Tom always missed *Tamā*. But he knew someday he would see his dad again. And he knew that Heavenly Father would always be there to help him. ●

ILLUSTRATIONS BY COREY EGBERT