

My Liberty Jail

G. Kevin Jones

O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place? . . . My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. (D&C 121:1, 7-8)

This dialogue of anguished questioning and consolation has an intensely personal meaning to me. The 1980s were a decade that severely tested my faith in Heavenly Father and my commitment to the Church. Whatever others will remember of these ten years, I will remember suffering: personally, professionally, and spiritually.

In January 1981 I was twenty-eight and had been practicing law for two and a half years. I was enjoying the social and professional status of a young, single LDS attorney. For seven years, I had sacrificed leisure, hobbies, and social life for my education. My professional life was now satisfying, and I was seriously looking for a wife. I wanted a temple marriage with a woman who also enjoyed intellectual challenge. I anticipated children. I would also have more time for church service, continued sports activity, community involvement, and foreign travel. In short, I was, I felt, in the very prime of my life.

Then I fell ill with an agonizing affliction diagnosed as chronic ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease which was progressive and curable only by the removal of the colon. The bowel and digestive problems were exacerbated by fevers, cramps, skin irritation, and fatigue. Medication slowed the progress of the disease but had hideous side effects. I'd always been very active and trim. Now my face puffed and became unnaturally rounded. Fluid collected at the

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back of my neck in a “camel hump” that swelled until I could no longer lift my head to look at the ceiling. A bloated “tire” around my waist made it difficult if not impossible to lean over to tie my shoes. I struggled to perform my duties as an attorney and retain some sense of professional dignity.

After four years of intensifying symptoms, I was forced to the next step—four surgeries and five additional hospitalizations for serious complications within one year. The surgeries, including having my colon removed, probably saved my life but did not restore my health. Moreover, one operation was not performed properly, and I will suffer from the consequences for the rest of my life. The physical pain I have endured is overshadowed by the spiritual and emotional pain of probably being unable to ever father children. During this time, my despair was so consuming that one night, before another major surgery, I prayed to die.

Devastated from the experience, I withdrew totally from Church participation. I was angry and felt completely alienated from God. I hated and loathed him. Why had he ignored my suffering and withheld his love and divine assistance? Why did he not assure that the surgeries were performed properly? I had received a special blessing from honorable priesthood members who had invoked his protection. I had also prayed fervently and received what I thought was a confirmation that the procedure would go all right. Nevertheless, it didn't, and disaster followed. Was I so unworthy that God would ignore these blessings and my personal pleadings in prayer? Was I not his child? Where were you, God, when I needed you the most in my life?

My anger, sorrow, and alienation from God were so complete that for nearly ten years I could not enter a church house, let alone rejoin the Saints for worship. Indeed, on one rare occasion I was determined to attend church but stayed less than ten minutes, becoming so literally nauseated that I vomited after I left priesthood meeting. While I knew that others had experienced unmerited suffering, they were only stories in magazines or individuals far removed from my life. This was different; this pain was mine and it was not fair.

Out of such pain, I have inevitably examined my relationship to God and the Church and have asked simple but profound questions. Why have I, an active, committed, tithe-paying Mormon, been subjected to such unjustified pain? Why have I retained my personal faith in my Heavenly Father? Why am I still a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? What specific teachings and practices continued to speak to me even through my despair?

Surely the first reason I have remained in the Church is because of the faith I learned from my family. When I look at my own faith in

God, a faith that has been severely tested during this past decade, I realize that my devotion to God and my membership in the Church are not automatic or a simple family ritual for me. I was born into a loving and active LDS family with a long and distinguished record of Church and community service. It is not a family where parents pressure children to conform to the Church. Instead, my parents taught me to be loyal to principles, which I believe are eternal, rather than to institutions. They accepted that their—and my—interpretations of these principles might sometimes collide with the institutional Church but that we would both be better for raising the question or expressing our concern.

Furthermore, in the places where I grew up, there was literally no LDS Church to interact with. Until I was eighteen, I lived in areas of the world where the only Church members were my family and an occasional additional American family. About thirty-five years ago, when I was only five, my father answered the call of the United States Department of State to spread democratic values in developing nations and took our family to the island of Java in the Republic of Indonesia. There he taught Indonesian students the principles of nation building modeled after the American democratic experience.

In that beautiful tropical island where the three great Asian religions converge—Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism—I grew up and learned to read. I didn't ride a bus to school, I didn't go to a school house, I didn't have classmates to play with, and I didn't have a stranger for a teacher. School started when I woke up and walked into my father's study where I was taught to read by my first teacher, my mother, Marie.

I still have the first book I read, and I remember the first word I learned to read. It was a four-letter word, but unlike other four-letter words that I would later be exposed to, this word is simple but meaningful. The word was "look." In many ways, it epitomizes my approach to life. I learned early to be a seeker—a seeker of knowledge, academic, temporal, eternal.

Between ages five and eighteen I lived in Asia. My family attended church in our own house where my father presided. We studied the scriptures consistently, courageously (we're lousy singers) sang the same hymn, "Behold, a Royal Army," and blessed and passed the sacrament. Our servants didn't understand this unusual gathering and openly snickered at our pathetic singing. My high school friends were often in attendance at the "Jones" Sunday School. They included a Jew and a Muslim, but the rest were unaffiliated. However, it was a popular church meeting, invariably followed by a game of basketball or some other sport and a great lunch. In the afternoon, my father would take

us on a trip to one of the many historic sites of Java or Lahore, Pakistan, or to visit Salvation Army friends who were engaged in true Christian service in a tough Muslim environment.

Our house was always open on Sunday, and a constant stream of visitors and students would come to see my parents. When we lived in Pakistan, we understood that some of these students were primarily coming to secretly court one another. Strict Islamic society forbids a woman to see a man outside of her own home. My parents simply overcame this restriction by scheduling school meetings which both sexes were required to attend. At these meetings, my parents were experts at smiling and being blind to what was going on.

These experiences deepened my faith, taught me to respect a variety of religious beliefs, and greatly increased our family unity. They did not, it is true, provide the bonding to the Church that often comes with participation within its organized structure, but they gave me the even more meaningful opportunity to live my religion in a different, sometimes hostile culture.

For that matter, being a Mormon in the United States also had its challenges. When I was in California for a few months, my fifth grade social studies class was studying American history. The chapter on the American West included a reference to the Mormon migration to Utah. My teacher, a rigid, traditional Christian, had an unexplained dislike for Mormons and, because I was a Mormon, to me. She forced me to stand up in the front of the class while she launched into a contemptuous anti-Mormon tirade. I was so terrified that I involuntarily urinated and was forced to spend the remainder of the school day in my wet pants, thoroughly humiliated, confused, and ashamed as I endured my classmates' ridicule. But I was also angry. I knew that my parents would never do that to someone of a different faith and that what my teacher had done was wrong.

Even before this, I had discovered that being Mormon was an identification of differentness, like being a Jew or being black, and that I would be treated differently because of my beliefs. While I was too young to appreciate all of the teachings of the Church, I knew that my Church membership was a distinguishing feature. As I grew up, I came to prize that differentness. My parents were highly respected members of the international community in which we lived, and I noticed that people expected more from our family because of our membership in the Church and its high standards. For example, my friends always looked to me to pray at specific occasions and, at such occasions, called me "deacon." I also liked the way our family interacted and the moral foundation it gave me during the tumultuous teenage years.

When confronted with my crisis of faith, I returned to my childhood memories. They seemed idyllic to me. I remembered the feeling when my mother read to me from the scriptures. I turned to the scriptures once again, this time as a harsher and more cynical critic but also, despite it, hoping for an affirmation of faith in God.

And I found it. Despite all that has happened to me, the scriptures testified authoritatively that my God lives. And I could not deny, despite my rejection of God and my alienation from him, that I, too, knew he exists. Perhaps someone else would have come to a different conclusion, but this was an answer I could not deny. That certainty gives me confidence that in the end all will be fair. Perhaps for now, it's too much to ask God to revoke the physical laws of the universe to protect me. The exchange between Korihor and Alma recorded in the Book of Mormon appeals to my legal training, perhaps, but it also expresses my hope and affirms my common sense intuition that there is a God:

Now Alma said unto [Korihor]: Will ye deny again that there is a God, and also deny the Christ? For behold, I say unto you, I know there is a God, and also that Christ shall come.

And now what evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only. (Alma 30:39-40)

I felt heartened by the unequivocal language of Doctrine and Covenants 20:17-19:

We know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them;

And that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness, created he them;

And gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.

I am touched by the humility and the practical reality of the brother of Jared's prayer to the Lord to touch stones so that they might shine forth in darkness and provide light in the vessels during this long season of rains and floods. The prayer was answered when "the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger" (Ether 3:6). Scripture records the miraculous event as follows: "And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear" (Ether 3:6).

Finally, in some of the most moving passages of holy scripture, 3 Nephi records the appearance of the resurrected Savior to the people

of Nephi who were permitted to feel his wounds, receive his blessings, and hear his teachings (3 Ne. 11–28).

My common sense also tells me, with a saving bit of humor, that I couldn't be so angry at God if I didn't, deep down, know he exists. But I do. I've stopped kicking that particular wall.

The whole course of my illness has, incidentally, been terribly difficult for my parents, particularly my mother. They have suffered with me and for me. The situation has made them ask the same "why" questions that I have. My mother says, "I'll want to have a good long talk about this with someone on the other side." She smiles when she says it, but there is no twinkle in her eye. She has never tried to give me easy answers or glib assurances. She has listened, accepted, supported and—when I could listen—has shared her own assurances; but she has never tried either to explain or explain away what has happened.

The second reason I retain faith in God and membership in the Church is my recognition of the beauty of the gospel message of love and Christian service and my desire to make that ideal my own. One of the clearest statements of Christ's gospel message is John 13:34–35: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

In Raymond Moody's popular book, *Life After Life* (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), the author investigates the experiences of those who have survived bodily death. One of the most common elements in the accounts studied and the element which has the most profound effect upon the individual is the encounter with a loving, warm spirit described as a "being of light." The being of light presents to the person a panoramic view of his or her life, during which the being stresses the importance of two things. One is gaining knowledge, and the other is loving other people, a love of a unique and profound kind.

One man who met the being of light felt totally loved and accepted, even while his whole life was displayed in a panorama for the being to see. He felt that the "question" that the being was asking him was whether he was able to love others in the same way. He now feels that it is his commission while on earth to try to learn to be able to do so. (pp. 92–93)

I have received much love from individuals in and outside the Church. When our family left for Indonesia, my father went ahead to find a home, leaving my mother to travel alone from Provo, Utah, with me, age five, and four-year-old Drew ("Duke"). Acting on a premonition or just scared to fly, she selected to travel the long distance from San Francisco to Indonesia by boat. This was an inspired deci-

sion as the plane the State Department had booked us to fly on crashed in the Pacific with no survivors.

During our journey, Duke became very ill and was diagnosed with leukemia. We stopped in Japan for medical treatment. My mother, who had rarely been out of Utah before, now found herself in a strange land with a seriously sick son and no family support. She had arranged with the ship's captain to contact the mission president and ask for his help. I remember walking down the ship's plank. At the other end stood two young men in white shirts, missionaries who had been sent to assist my mother. It was clear that their assistance was needed. While we were State Department personnel and entitled to the assistance of the federal government, our government is not well known for assisting its citizens with problems while traveling abroad, and our experience was no exception.

My brother, accompanied by my mother, was quickly taken to the army hospital, but bureaucratic rules prevented me from staying with them. I was farmed out to a local military family who didn't want me and, after a few days, moved in with a kind LDS family who were working in Japan. I stayed with them for three months, seeing my mother only once. She took the time away from night and day attendance on my brother to travel to a mid-point between the hospital and my new home. My foster family brought me the rest of the distance, and we visited in the train station. My brother eventually recovered, and we continued our journey to Indonesia. Whether the original diagnosis was incorrect—at that time there was no cure for leukemia—or whether the prayers of my mother were answered, I do not know. I do know that at a time of great family stress, members of the LDS Church provided invaluable Christian service to my family.

The person in my life who most consistently exemplifies the gospel principle of love for others through Christian service is my mother. Her prompt and generous assistance to students, ward members, and community residents wherever she has lived is legendary. Out of all of her many acts of Christian service, one stands out in my mind. Indonesia was a desperately poor country in the 1950s. Beggars and other destitute and diseased people often came to our door pleading for assistance. Like other members of the family, I would answer the door and routinely give them help.

Early one morning I noticed two people wrapped together in a single shawl that covered their faces, struggling up the driveway, clinging together. They wore rags and had no shoes. I hurried to answer the door but recoiled as they begged for money. I could tell that these were no ordinary beggars. Their faces were invisible, but their hands and feet were hideously deformed. The stench was indescribable. My

mother, who rarely used firm discipline, grabbed my shoulder, called for my father, and led me away. She had never done such a thing before.

These beggars were lepers, suffering from the effects of that hideous disease, their flesh literally rotting as they lived. They were hated and feared in Indonesian society, but my mother did not order them off the premises. Rather, she had my dad, who spoke fluent Indonesian, direct them to the back entrance where food would be waiting for them. I watched them eat and later slowly walk down the driveway. That was not an unusual act of kindness for my mother. She never turned away a beggar or person looking for work that I can remember without offering some assistance, usually food.

I too have received love from those I have not known well. Bishops have taken an active interest in my life. The time they have taken from busy professional and personal affairs is truly admirable. Through a terrible irony, this support was completely lacking during my illness. That increased my pain. However, just a few months ago, when I was struggling emotionally with the effects of a new medical condition, I wanted to see the bishop. He was too busy to see me on Tuesday night, his regular time for interviews, and invited me to come to his house later that week. I hesitated. I know the time constraints placed upon bishops, and the need for time with their own family. However, I accepted and received much-needed spiritual guidance.

As a result of such examples, it has seemed natural for me to provide service to others as I could. One of my family chores in Indonesia was to collect our tin cans, bottles, and paper; we donated these items to Christian and Muslim relief organizations to be used as cooking utensils by the country's poor. It seems amazing in twentieth-century America that these items were of such value that they were actually sold on the open market. Later as a teenager in Lahore, Pakistan, I collected and provided needed school supplies for a struggling Catholic boys' school. I can never forget my parents' sensitivity to the poor, and a commitment to community service is part of living the gospel for me as an adult. It gives me great satisfaction to donate time and money to the shelter for the homeless and numerous other organizations that aid the needy. I consistently perform pro bono legal work, coach youth athletic teams, and have been identified by the neighbor children as a soft touch for donations to worthy causes.

True Christian service cultivates a sense of community among the Saints, and these shared values are a powerful reason for me to stay in the Church. Community service makes me feel whole; it completes my personality and desire for societal involvement. Service puts me in touch with very interesting people whose paths would not otherwise

cross mine. It provides meaning and substance to my life. Service reminds me of my spiritual roots, my gentler nature, and my obligation as a child of God to help my brothers and sisters. Simply stated, I just feel better about myself when I am actively engaged in service.

The third reason why I retain faith in my Heavenly Father and stay in the Church is the gospel principle of eternal progression and its corollary, eternal marriage. Scripture teaches that the “glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36). The scriptures further admonish us “to seek . . . out of the best books words of wisdom” (D&C 88:118), and to “study and learn and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15).

There is a reason for such applied study. The principle of eternal progression is the most egalitarian of all God’s teachings. In its promise, we may become like God, an almost incomprehensible concept. As President Snow said, “As man is God once was, as God is man may become.” Therefore “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his [or her] diligence and obedience than another, he [or she] will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18–19).

How reasonable and fair! The promise that your work will be eternally rewarded is a powerful motivator to learn, study, and develop your talents. It has special meaning for me. I have worked hard to perfect my legal skills; and while the next world may have no need for lawyers, the discipline of mind and body that comes with mastering a demanding profession will remain with me.

In Moody’s *Life After Life*, the second important message stressed by the being of light is acquiring knowledge. Survivors of bodily death report that the being of light intimated that the acquisition of knowledge continues even in the afterlife. One person offered the advice, “No matter how old you are, don’t stop learning. For this is a process, I gather, that goes on for eternity” (p. 93).

I wholeheartedly share this view. Learning, whether in formal education or informal self-study, has a special place in my life. My father escaped the poverty of rural Utah by earning his Ph.D. in 1954 with great self-discipline and sacrifice. He left Fairfield, Utah, whose population of dogs exceeded that of humans, with only a \$100 Sears and Roebuck scholarship to attend Utah State Agricultural College. His parents, who were very poor and who lacked an appreciation of university education, could provide no assistance. Similarly, at the age of thirty-eight, my mother returned to college to complete her degree, a process that required her to leave my father in Indonesia for one year.

I have also sacrificed for my education. In addition to the time required to complete undergraduate and graduate study, I personally financed half of my post-high school education. I have earned three law degrees. My legal study did not stop with the J.D. but includes a master of laws and a doctor of juridical science, the highest degree awarded for the study of law. My graduate legal education was self-imposed. It was not required by my profession or employer. I simply love the challenge of formal education and, for personal satisfaction, wanted to attain the highest graduate law degree. I confess that vindication was also a motive. My J.D. study was not as accomplished as I would have liked. In fact, a law professor told me that I lacked the necessary research and writing skills to be an accomplished attorney. After fifteen law review articles, several of which received national recognition, and service in the United States Supreme Court, I wish I had the opportunity to remind this professor that learning is an eternal, ongoing principle. The student who leaves your class one day is not necessarily limited to the learning of that period.

I also enjoy studying Church history, gospel principles, and the scriptures. I am uplifted by the accomplishments of our pioneer members and challenged by their commitment. Moreover, some of the most interesting and uplifting stories are captured in scripture. For me, it's a source of comfort to know that our Heavenly Father recognizes the value of learning and actively encourages it.

D&C 132 holds out the promise of eternal progression within the covenant of celestial marriage with the simple words: "Whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens" (D&C 132:46).

The attraction of such a promise is obvious. Why spend all the time to locate and cultivate a marriage partner if the love from that association ends with death? What a liberating promise to know that your association and love for your companion will continue! It deepens any relationship with special meaning and force. You will not only continue to live after this life, but that life will be one of endless growth and intimate association.

For me, the principle of eternal progression within a celestial marriage is a powerful attraction of the gospel, but my own prospects for marriage have been significantly reduced by my medical problems. Marriage is difficult enough without the additional burden of poor health, a condition that thus far has discouraged a successful union. My medical condition is particularly trying when I consider the promise of my patriarchal blessing, "At a future time in your life you will have the great privilege to take one of your choice to the temple

to receive the covenant of eternal marriage. . . . There are choice spirits waiting to enter your home to bring blessings of joy and happiness to you and your wife." Unfortunately, at this time, the women of "my choice" have refused my invitations to fulfill this promise, and I cannot father children. Yes, adoption may be a possibility, but I do not think that was the intent of the blessing when I received it.

I continue to struggle with feeling abandoned in my righteous desires by my Heavenly Father. I am not only denied the enjoyment of a complete family and the continuation of my name in succeeding generations but physical and emotional intimacy that I had anticipated as part of marriage. I have always led a chaste life—postponing intimacy until marriage, just as the Church teaches. As a teenager and young adult, I consciously rejected the promiscuous lifestyle of my contemporaries, feeling assured that I would express my desires in the proper marriage setting. As I look back, I feel that decision was right, but I still cannot help feeling cheated. If I'd known then what the future held, I'm not sure I would have made the same decision. I had been taught by my Church to postpone physical intimacy with a woman until marriage, and I honored that teaching. Now, as an older man who sees the prospects of marriage and intimacy diminishing, I feel that I played by the rules, only to be betrayed.

Naturally, it only increases my frustration to hear "consoling" statements like, "In the eternities, you will be whole," or "Wait until the resurrection." I feel that I have waited enough. I have great empathy for committed LDS women who also suffer from the lack of a marriage partner or whose biological clock prevents motherhood.

The final reason that I retain faith in my Heavenly Father and stay in the Church is the principle of free agency. As part of the plan of salvation, we had to have the opportunity to choose. "Ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life" (2 Ne. 10:23). The power to choose also included the chance that we would make wrong choices. Our Heavenly Father knew this and, through the atonement of Christ, provided a path for our redemption.

Our individual progression requires that we have the power of choice and protect it as we exercise it. That power, however, has a correspondingly high cost. "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things" (2 Ne. 2:11). Sometimes that opposition can be so overwhelming that we feel that God has forsaken us. Such a feeling is natural. Even the Savior, as he hung on the cross, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). The Prophet Joseph in Liberty Jail, after witnessing the brutal treatment of the Saints and being unmercifully hounded by an un-

just use of the law, appealed to God, his heart overflowing with pity and despair:

O God, where art thou? And where is the pavillion that covereth thy hiding place?

How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?

Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them?

O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol—stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavillion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered; let thine ear be inclined; let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion toward us. (D&C 121:1-4)

The plan of salvation does not include our protection and immunity from disease, unjust treatment, or accident. However, in response to Joseph's cry to God in Liberty Jail, the Lord assured him, "Thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7). That promise not only assures us that all will be fair in the end but also challenges us to overcome the obstacles we meet in this telestial world. That is one of our tasks—to learn to cope with adversity and continue to maintain our belief in Christ.

The principle of free agency is profoundly important for me. I have a tendency to question, to disagree, to refuse to take pronouncements at face value. To be honest, I am a dissenter by nature. I come from a family where dissent is an honored tradition. I identify with the philosophy of the late historian Juanita Brooks, who related her father's advice for maintaining activity in the Church:

One day Dad said to me, "My girl, if you follow this tendency to criticize, I'm afraid you will talk yourself out of the Church. I'd hate to see you do that. I'm a cowboy, and I've learned that if I ride *in* the herd, I am lost—totally helpless. One who rides counter to it is trampled and killed. One who only trails behind means little, because he leaves all responsibility to others. It is the cowboy who rides the edge of the herd, who sings and calls and makes himself heard who helps direct the course. Happy sounds are generally better than cursing, but there are times when he must maybe swear a little and swing a whip or lariat to round in a stray or turn the leaders. So don't lose yourself, and don't ride away and desert the outfit. Ride the edge of the herd and be alert, but know your directions, and call out loud and clear. Chances are, you won't make any difference, but on the other hand, you just might. ("Riding Herd" in DIALOGUE 9 [Spring 1974]: 11-12)

This advice really fits my own family. My mother's aunt, Lula Clegg, was an exceptional woman. Born in rural Heber City, Utah, at

the turn of the century, she possessed a strong intellect and a powerful will. She refused to be limited by her "singleness," traveled to Hawaii in 1915, and studied education at Columbia University in New York City in 1917. Both of these were very unusual acts for a Utah woman at that time. She took that same spirit of independence into her work. During the late 1950s and 1960s she was employed by Brigham Young University as the director of Continuing Education, which at that time included home study, evening school, and special conferences and institutes.

It was the practice of President Wilkinson to review the tithing receipts of BYU faculty when their contracts were up for renewal, and he confronted my great-aunt over the amount of her tithing. Was this a full tithe? he demanded. Such an intense meeting with a powerful university president who was your employer may have overcome most faculty. Aunt Lula, however, stood her ground and promptly replied that her tithing would increase if the president of the university paid its women faculty salaries equal to those of its men faculty. The amount missing in tithing was the difference between her salary and that of her male counterparts. While one may question Aunt Lula's use of tithing as a means of focusing attention on the disparity between men's and women's salaries, I must admire her forthright courage in asserting the simple, correct principle that employment does not justify paying a lower salary to women who do the same or similar work as their male colleagues. Priesthood and gender are not justifications to pay a person more or another less for one's labor.

Her brother and my grandfather, Luke Clegg, was an outstanding person. Born into a family of seventeen children, he learned the value of hard work early in life and also possessed an independent but committed spirit. He left his family at age forty-one to serve a mission in the Eastern States where he worked on the first Hill Cumorah Pageant, he graduated from college with his eldest son at the age of forty-five, and he joined the Navy during World War II when he was forty-nine. His own sons and most of his young male students were serving in the military in that great war. He was touched by their absence and felt that he had already lived longer than those being sent to war.

However, his real love, outside of my grandmother, was politics. He lived and breathed politics. He never lost an election in seventeen campaigns and served as a Duchesne County School Board member, Provo City commissioner, and Utah State senator from 1924 to his retirement in 1970 at age seventy-four. While serving in the senate, he demonstrated that independence of spirit which I see so clearly in myself and other family members, particularly my mother. Grandfather Clegg knew the value of education, was chairman of the Senate

Education Committee, and had served as a teacher and principal. Thus, it was from a sense of moral conviction that early in his service as a state senator he provided the swing vote against his governor and his party to join the Democrats in defeating a bill to reduce funding for public education. He paid a high price for that vote. He was warned by the governor and the Republican leadership of the consequences to his political career of voting against his party on this important issue.

That warning was eventually fulfilled. His seniority and record of achievement later qualified him to be president of the senate in 1959, a position which, at that time, often led to election to Congress. However, Sherman P. Lloyd was elected president of the senate, later received his party's nomination for Congress, and was elected in 1962 as a member of Utah's congressional delegation. Breaking ranks doomed my grandfather's leadership role in Utah Republican politics. He accepted that, affirmed that the benefit to Utah's children of the bill was more important than his own political career, and remained loyal to the Republican party throughout his life. I deeply respect his courage.

Another act of political courage is special to me because I personally observed it. The campaign for United States senator in 1974 between then-Salt Lake City Mayor Jake Garn and Congressman Wayne Owens was a major political battle and close contest. In the middle of the campaign, Ezra Taft Benson, then an apostle, spoke to employees of the Deseret Industries and admonished them that the American Independent Party, an emerging third party, was like the party of God and supported Book of Mormon principles in the latter days. The implication of the speech was clear; he was encouraging good Church members to vote for the American Independent Party candidate, which could tilt the 1974 senate election.

Grandfather Clegg was quick to react. He did not feel that the LDS Church, of which he had been a lifelong, faithful member, had any role in endorsing candidates—addressing issues, perhaps, but not in naming a preference for any party. Without hesitating, he called General Authorities who were personal friends of his and voiced his strong disapproval of Elder Benson's remarks. Grandfather Clegg was a friend of Apostle Benson's. They had worked together and liked each other. However, neither their friendship nor the fact that Elder Benson was an apostle prevented Grandfather Clegg from voicing his concern over such conduct. I remember that shortly after my grandfather's calls to Church headquarters, the Church issued a statement affirming its neutrality in partisan politics. I don't know whether my grandfather was influential in that decision, but I do know that he didn't hesitate to speak his mind. It was a responsible act of "riding herd."

I feel a kindred spirit to these acts of individual courage. Duke and I attended BYU in the early 1970s. We were both scholarship students and respected university standards. However, Duke liked to wear his hair longer than the university approved “crew cut” and was constantly in trouble with the Office of Student Affairs over the length of his hair. Finally, the university threatened to expel him unless he conformed to their definition of appropriate hair length. I remember listening outside the office while a university representative informed him of this decision. The injustice, stupidity, and hypocrisy of the university was intolerable. I became so angry over the unnecessary tension caused about this trivial issue that I stalked down the hall to the dean of student life, walked unceremoniously into his office, and angrily told him that if this really was the Lord’s university, He would express love and tolerance for those students who were achieving academically; that after all, this was a university, not a reform school, and that my brother’s only “sin” was a little hair on the collar. He was so surprised it took him a moment to respond. I’m certain that, in correct Mormondom, a university official had rarely, if ever, received such blunt talk from a student.

Duke finally submitted to the pressure and got his hair cut. Later, he voluntarily left BYU and finished his last year of undergraduate education at the University of Alaska—Anchorage. For me, the experience was among several that I had at BYU that convinced me that I could not accept a mission call. I felt that the true gospel of Christ had been trivialized to the level of a haircut, and I did not want to serve a mission for an organization that placed more emphasis on hair length than on spiritual service. As I look back, I regret that decision. I should not have allowed the acts of others to dissuade me from a mission. My naiveté and inexperience had not prepared me for the challenge of dealing with the institutional Church or its university.

Other acts by Church officials have been similarly upsetting, however. It causes me great pain when General Authorities take action, which I perceive to be unwarranted and arbitrary, against my friends for simply writing in *DIALOGUE* or speaking at the Sunstone symposium. My association with *DIALOGUE* and *Sunstone* spans nearly my entire adult life. It provided valuable support and encouragement for me during my illness, and I can honestly say I would not be an active Mormon without these stimulating and independent forums. One of my greatest challenges is to extend to the Brethren the same love and tolerance that I criticize them for lacking in their dealing with my inquiring friends.

You may feel that these four principles are not that important to the gospel. For me, they have provided powerful reasons to maintain

faith in my Heavenly Father and stay in the Church when all outside forces—and even my own anger and sense of betrayal—encouraged me to leave. I am reminded of the words of Alma, where he counsels his son Helaman with these words: “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6). Following the counsel of Alma, I am now a seeker of spirituality and wisdom. During this crisis, I have sought confirmation of the existence of God and sought to understand the meaning of unmerited suffering. I have found the former but have not yet grasped the latter.

The 1990s are beginning like the 1980s. I look healthy, trim, even athletic; but I have just been diagnosed with a new and chronic ailment, Meniere’s Disease, for which there is no cure and from which I will most likely suffer throughout the rest of my life. Meniere’s Disease causes extreme vertigo, nausea, dizziness, and vomiting; severe episodes confine me to my bed. Moreover, I have found that the original diagnosis of ulcerative colitis was apparently wrong. I am now told that I suffer from Crohn’s disease, an incurable inflammatory bowel disease that requires different medical treatment than I received and, furthermore, does not call for a complete colostomy.

The worst part of these diseases is not the physical pain and discomfort but their limiting effect on my personal and professional progress. I am an intense and energetic person with a strong will to succeed and meet new challenges. I chafe at the restrictions placed on my professional career by constant illness. It is fine to be blessed with a good mind, but you need a healthy body to truly allow that mind to reach its full potential.

Still, I do not anticipate a decade of struggling with despair. My body is suffering, but at long last my spirit is recovering. It is getting stronger, kinder, more sensitive.

In the final analysis, I retain faith in my Heavenly Father and membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because I know that my heavenly parents live; that they love me and want me to succeed; that the restoration of the gospel is true; and most important, that when I truly live the principles taught by the Savior, I am a better person, able to offer more to those I come into contact with. Those reasons are good enough for me now—but oh God! sometimes the pain and sorrow of this journey are so great. . . . It just has to be fair in the end.