



# LIVING PROPHETS SPOKE TO ME

NAME WITHHELD

Several years ago I eagerly signed a request sheet in my ward as soon as it was announced that a few tickets for general conference were available. Later that day as a counselor in our ward bishopric pressed a ticket into my hand, he smiled warmly and said, “We wanted you to go.” I didn’t try to ponder all he meant by that but nevertheless felt warmed by his comment.

Now, here I was, sitting on the first row of the balcony taking in the overwhelming grandeur that is general conference, listening to the Tabernacle Choir. When it was time for the congregation to sing, I sang with enthusiasm. As we sang “How Firm a Foundation,” I was filled to overflowing by the Spirit, though the meeting had scarcely begun.

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, began by saying, “My dear brothers and sisters and friends, my message this morning is one of hope and solace to heartbroken parents who have done their best to rear their children in righteousness with love and devotion, but have despaired because their child has rebelled or been led astray to follow the path of evil and destruction.” The words pierced my heart—I knew this message was for me. He continued, “I am reminded of the words of Jeremiah: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, . . . Rahel weeping for her children’” (Jeremiah 31:15). Had my own prayers and tears been heard? I had spent 35 years of anguish over just such a child.

President Faust continued, “To this the Lord gave this welcome reassurance, ‘Refrain thy voice from weeping, . . . for thy work shall be rewarded . . . ; they shall come again from the land of the enemy’ [Jeremiah 31:16]. . . . The love of a parent

for a child is continuous and transcends heartbreak and disappointment.”<sup>1</sup> I realized that President Faust understood my problem, and he was speaking to me. My tears flowed freely.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that topics are often not assigned to the Brethren for general conference. Yet all the speakers that morning seemed to have been inspired to give insights and comfort to those who needed counseling. I was lifted in spirit and felt renewed and reinvigorated.

I returned home and listened to the afternoon session of the conference, pondering the talks I heard about eternal marriage and happy families. These are difficult topics for me, since my marriage ended long ago and my adult daughter’s mental illness, use of drugs and alcohol, and habits of deception continue to wreak havoc with her life and mine too. Yet I felt comforted and blessed.

Now, a year after that beautiful conference, I have read through those talks again and again. I was greatly blessed that day and given strength to go forward with my life. I considered that perhaps it was time to quit punishing myself for the way my child turned out.

Although the prophet may not have assigned the topics for those general conference talks, I believe that Heavenly Father, through the promptings of the Spirit, did. I thank the Brethren for speaking directly to me and to others who needed such comfort. ■

#### NOTE

1. “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 61.

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