

# Joining Hands with God

*The loss of our infant daughter taught me that the plan of salvation can help us through even our most difficult trials.*

By Joshua C. Irvine

As a young father, I felt there were a number of realities so far in the future that they did not need to be daily concerns: college for my boys, who were only ages two and three; retirement for me; and the death of immediate family members. While I had been affected by the death of relatives, the possible passing of my own wife or children seemed to be something that would just come later. As a teenager, I had attended my grandfather's funeral. As a missionary, I mourned with members of a small ward that lost a dear loved one. As a returned missionary, I was a pallbearer at the funeral of my other grandfather. And as a new husband, I held my wife as she wept at the passing of her last living grandparent. But nothing would more keenly teach me of the eternal role of birth—and its corollary,



death—than having to face the burden of burying my infant daughter.

People say the experience of expecting a child is different each time. However, after the joy with which I anticipated the arrival of our two sons,

I never dreamed I would experience the spectrum of emotions I did while we were expecting our third child, emotions ranging from anxiety and apprehension to melancholy and depression. Over the course of my wife's pregnancy, we discovered that our unborn child faced serious medical problems. As time passed, the severity of these problems became clearer, and we subsequently began to deal with the reality that our little girl would not labor long in mortality. Yet throughout this entire process, we were blessed to enjoy the comfort that only the sweet, tender mercies of the Lord can bring.

During this time, my thoughts continued to return to the beauty of the plan of salvation. I thought about the many lessons I had been a part of as a missionary. One day, while going about my normal routine, the words of Jacob came powerfully to mind: “Death hath passed upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator” (2 Nephi 9:6). In my heart, I asked the Lord, “How is it merciful to be given the task of burying my little girl?” Then, in soft, comforting impressions, the reply came that death is an essential part of the whole plan. Its mercy is found in that it offers the means to return home. Knowing the necessity of death does not remove all the pain and suffering associated with it, but I realized that through the difficult trial of losing our daughter, we were joining hands with God to bring about His great work.

As I continued to think about the peace that filled my soul and soothed my spirit, my mind looked at both the creation of life and the reality of death. My wife and I had, indeed, joined hands with God to create a mortal body that would house a spirit. And yet all was in the care of a loving and all-knowing Heavenly Father. When He is ready, He will call us home, releasing us from our service in mortality to continue our efforts beyond the veil.

I know that our little Sariah was called home to carry on other missions and that her role in mortality was fulfilled. Of course, such a realization does not completely remove the pangs of separation. However, I find strength through my faith in the Savior, He who felt all pain and suffering in order to know how to come to our aid (see Alma 7:11–12) and how to wipe away our tears (see Isaiah 25:8). Through the Holy Ghost, I have been blessed with peace and comfort. Over time, I have come to learn for myself that the dawn of hope and eternal promise will come to each of us, breaking the darkness of doubt and pain, if we will but join hands with God and seek the source of all light. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

# Fear Not, My Child

By LaRene Porter Gaunt

*You  
came to us from God—  
a child so pure  
that in your trip to earth  
you didn't need to stay and prove to Him  
that you would do His will.*

*God only needed someone willing  
to create for you a home—  
and then to let you go.*

*How blessed are we,  
for He has chosen us.  
And though we weep,  
peace comes in knowing  
that death will only bring  
the sleep that wakens you to life again  
to breathe the warmth of paradise.*

*Fear not, my child.  
We will be together soon  
and hold you in our arms—  
encircled in celestial love  
that unites us with our God.*