

The Unplanned DUET

BY TROY LOVE

I was humiliated and embarrassed, but my bishop came to my aid and helped me learn a valuable lesson.

When I was about 12, I was asked to sing a solo in my home ward. My parents encouraged me to memorize the hymn so that I could look out into the audience. I worked on the song for many weeks until I could sing it without looking at the words. When the Sunday arrived, I sat on the stand and felt my heart pounding. I had sung in other wards before, but I felt nervous singing in front of people I knew. My greatest fear was that I would make a mistake.

When it was time, I stood up and walked up to the microphone. I felt my stomach flip. I was too afraid to make eye contact with anyone, so I looked at the clock at the back instead. My accompanist began to play the introduction, and I started to sing. I made it halfway through the hymn without any difficulties when I looked down from the clock to the congregation. Suddenly, I forgot the words to the hymn. My accompanist continued playing for a few more measures until she figured out I had stopped singing. She went back to where I had left off and encouragingly played the melody, hoping to remind me of the words.

The words did not come. Fear began to rise within me. My face flushed with heat, and I could feel my ears turning red. My mind raced through the words of the hymn trying to remember what came next, but the words did not

come. I looked out into the audience feeling humiliated and embarrassed. My heart crumpled with disappointment and embarrassment. I began to cry. Tears rolled down my cheeks, and I hung my head, burying my face in my hands. I felt everyone staring at me. I wasn't sure whether I should sit down or stand there until I could remember the words.

Suddenly, I felt a firm hand on my shoulder. I looked up through teary eyes to see my bishop, Bishop Smith, smiling at me. He leaned down and told me that he would sing with me. He then nodded to the sister to begin playing. Bishop Smith's beautiful baritone voice filled the chapel as he began to sing. He knew the words! As soon as he sang them, I remembered them as well. With his arm around my shoulder, I felt the courage to begin again, and together we finished the song.

I have reflected upon my experience with Bishop Smith many times since then. For me, one powerful lesson has been how Bishop Smith's act of standing beside me represents the way Jesus Christ strengthens us in our times of need.

As Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "Many carry heavy burdens. . . . In one way or another, many are heavy laden. . . . [The Savior] knows of our anguish, and He is there for us" ("He Heals the Heavy Laden," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 6–7).

And as the Savior Himself said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). **NE**

