



MY MISSION WAS

I returned home early because of health problems, a fact that weighed me down until I realized that the Lord is in charge.

I served as a welfare sister missionary in Peru in 1983. My companion and I loved teaching in the picturesque village of Huancayo, nestled high in the Andes Mountains. There was plenty of work, and the people were delightful to work with.

During this time, I felt several impressions that I would be going home early. They came at the oddest times and places, and each time I felt them I confided in my companion that I had felt the impression again.

Many months after I started receiving these impressions, my companion and I traveled to Lima to attend a welfare sisters' conference in the mission office. Our mission president spoke with us about the things we needed to accomplish in our welfare assignments. He then said something I have never forgotten: "They are sending us another welfare sister." Looking around the room, he continued, "Which one of you is going home early?" These words hit me like a punch in the stomach. I felt certain that I was the one who would be going home early.

Some weeks after the conference, I became seriously ill and had to return home.

It is difficult not to be able to finish the full length of your mission. You wonder about the things that could have been, the things you missed. For many years I could not shake the feelings of sorrow and yearning for the experiences I might have had otherwise.

In 2004, 21 years after my return from Peru, my mother's cousin encouraged me to read the history of my great-aunt Adella Haynie written by her mother. Although I had read much of it before, as I read it this time I discovered an amazing detail that became a source of comfort to me.

Adella Haynie had died suddenly 16 months into her service in the Central States Mission. Her mission president, Samuel O. Bennion, accompanied her body home. In my great-grandmother's account of her daughter's funeral, she wrote, "On her white casket was a gold-colored plaque with the inscription, 'Adella Haynie, Princess of the Central States Mission,' this plaque having been placed there by



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her mission president. President Bennion spoke at her funeral and said that he 'didn't know that the Lord had any apologies to make. She was His, and if He felt like calling her away like that, it was His affair.' He also said, 'For some cause they had sent a new missionary girl out not a week before Adella died and I wondered why. They wouldn't send a lone girl out when they ought to know I didn't have a place for just one alone. But as it happened, she was needed.'"

As I read my great-grandmother's account of her daughter's funeral, tears came to my eyes, not only because of the touching love for Adella shown by her

mission president, but also because of the amazing similarity to my story. I realized that in both cases, the Lord knew well beforehand what would happen and had prepared additional sisters to take our places. I couldn't deny the comfort I felt in what I was reading. The

words of Adella's mission president seemed to apply to me as well.

I no longer wished that I could have stayed the last six months of my mission. I had finished my mission well.

I love that the Lord can comfort us in such amazing ways.

I am sure that my great-grandmother, in writing the account of her daughter's funeral, had no idea that words she wrote in sorrow would mend the broken heart of her great-granddaughter some 89 years later. Perhaps the experiences we record today will emerge in the life of a future loved one, carrying comfort from the past. ■