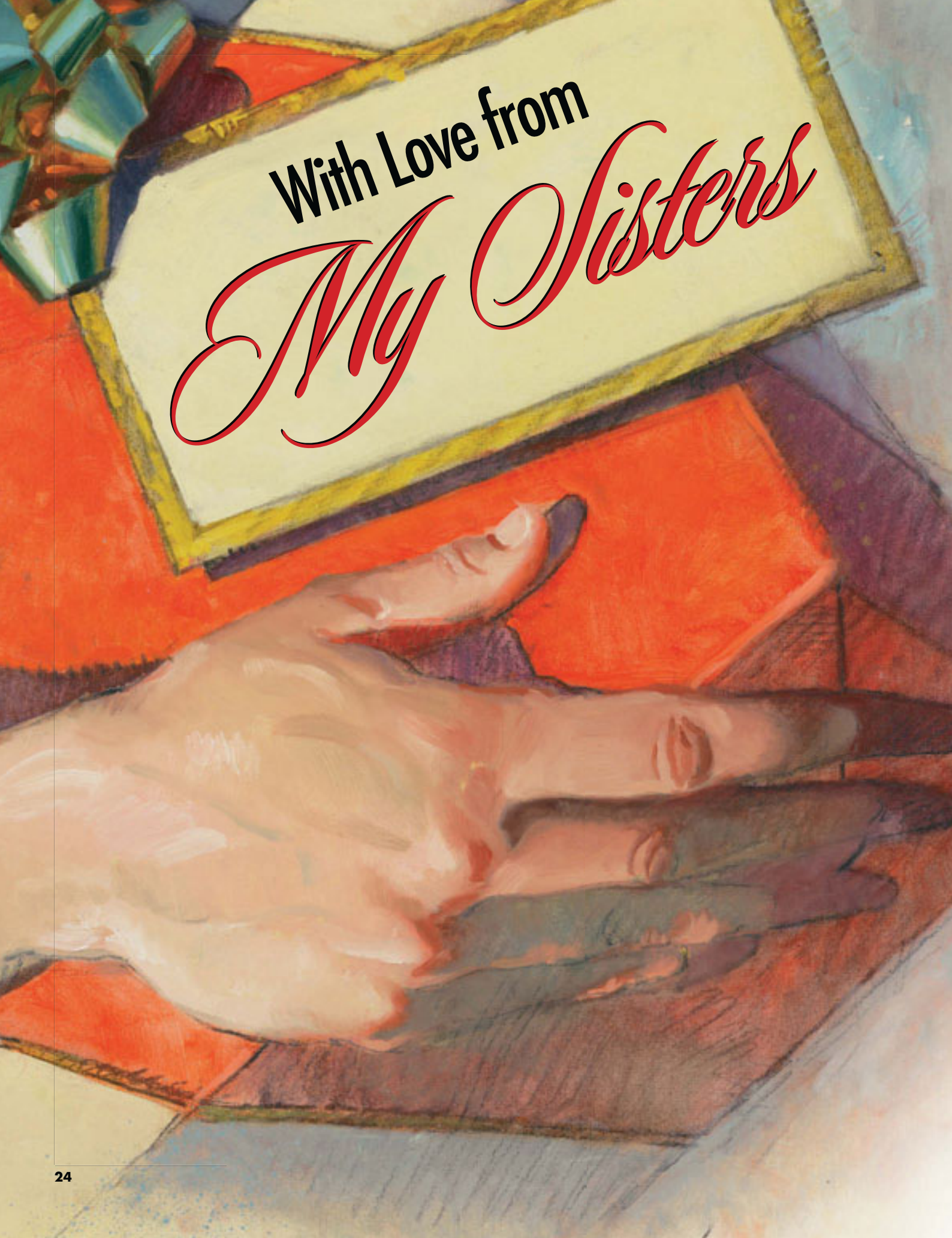


With Love from

My Sisters



"We are fine," I assured my visiting teachers. Still, their service that Christmas made all the difference.

BY MARINA PETROVA

The closer Christmas got, the heavier my heart became. In November, neither my husband nor I had regular work. I paid for rent, electricity, and the telephone out of my decreased earnings, and my husband paid the car payment from his diminished wages. The remaining money was barely enough to get us by. December brought more work and a return to normal, but we wouldn't be paid until January.

Under these circumstances, even a holiday dinner was out of the question.

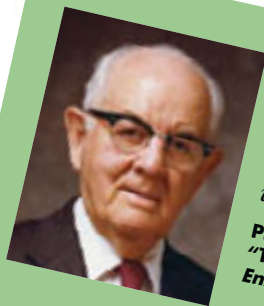
"Everything will be all right," I told myself. That summer my husband had picked a lot of raspberries, and we had made jam. We would have pancakes and jam and would make our own gifts. But when our three daughters (ages 6, 8, and 14) began happily decorating with garlands they had made, all the while talking about what their parents might give them for Christmas, I was sick at heart.

One evening my visiting teachers came by for an unexpected visit. I have no brothers and sisters of my own, so the Relief Society sisters in my

branch—particularly my visiting teachers—have truly become my sisters. That night they shared an interesting lesson, then began to visit about the upcoming holiday. I assured them that everything was fine but said that it would be a rather "poor" Christmas for us. They assured me that they would be praying for our family.

One day when my husband came to pick me up from work, he said that everyone at home was impatiently awaiting my arrival. A sister from our branch had dropped off some boxes. When we opened them, they contained all the delicacies of the season: fruit, cookies, candy, other groceries, decorations, and lovingly wrapped gifts. My eyes filled with tears of gratitude. And that wasn't the end. The family of one of my visiting teachers surprised us on Christmas morning with a box of gifts.

In the end our "poor" Christmas was a particularly joyful one. Our home was filled with not only the spirit of Christmas but also the warmth and love of my visiting teachers and other members of our branch. I came to understand that the Lord truly does meet our needs most often through other people—particularly those He has assigned and inspired to watch over and care for us. ■



"God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985),
"The Abundant Life," Tambuli, June 1979, 3;
Ensign, July 1978, 2.