

Quilted Expressions of Human Ties

Seemingly commonplace quilts can illustrate the complex nature of human ties and our relationship with self, family, community, and the world.

Life is like a crazy quilt (right)—a colorful representation of oddities stitched together into one complete composition of who we are. In spite of the chaotic appearance of the fabric scraps in a crazy quilt, the quilt creates a beautiful whole, organized on a basic structure, often a square. Likewise, all our uniquely shaped experiences are pieced together to create individual identities founded upon our spiritual nature and the experience of human relationships.

Many small relationships are integral pieces in the fabric of the person we call “me.” The narrative of “my life” starts as a relationship with self, involves family ties, expands to interactions within a community, and reaches out to connect with the world. Our relationship with God is at the heart of all other relationships. He is the thread that ties us together.

The art of quilting can help us share stories of the relationships that make up our individual and communal identities. Seemingly commonplace quilts can illustrate the complex nature of human ties and tell a story that beautifully ties together all the pieces of “me.” A recent exhibit at the Church History Museum, “Pieces of Me: Quilted Expressions of Human Ties,” featured quilts and artifacts, most made by Latter-day Saint artists. Selections are shown on the following pages. More information about these and other quilts and artifacts is available at piecesofmeexhibit.lds.org. ■

▼ *Detail from Crazy Quilt, 1890, by Emma Green Bull. The body of this 69-by-90-inch quilt is made up of irregular-shaped pieces of fabric (velvets, silks, brocades, taffeta prints, solids, stripes, and plaids) augmented with various types of embroidery.*



► Schimmelbusch Family Quilt, 2008, commissioned by Krista Schimmelbusch and made by Jaimie Davis.

Some quilts serve to etch the life story of an ancestor into the hearts of posterity. This quilt symbolically records the ancestry that ties generations together. Traditional Baltimore Album Quilt motifs represent the family's lineage and religion, which in this quilt includes the thirteen Articles of Faith. These symbols collectively illustrate a narrative about the family's identity.



COURTESY OF KRISTA SCHIMMELBUSCH, DO NOT COPY



EMMA GREEN, COURTESY OF WALTER STEVEN BURDETTE, © IRI

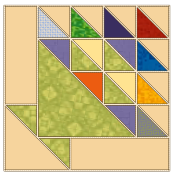
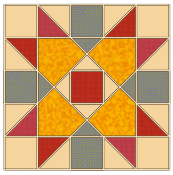
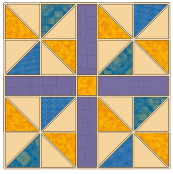


© IRI, COURTESY OF LORENE POLARD



© IRI, COURTESY OF LORENE POLARD

▲ Sampler, 1793, by Mariam Messelmenin (left), and Sampler, circa 1842, by Maria Louisa Cowdrey (right). As Maria learned to embroider from her grandmother, Mariam, she developed a sense of the aesthetic and learned her figures and letters. Several motifs repeated in the two samplers show that Maria copied stitches exactly from her grandmother's older sampler.



Four Key Relationships

“As we turn to our Heavenly Father and seek His wisdom regarding the things that matter most, we learn over and over again the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellow-man, and with ourselves.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 21.

► *Detail from Robbing Peter to Pay Paul, circa 1852, by Thomas and Betsy Bullock. Family bonds are nurtured as husband and wife labor together in the creation of a home. After their marriage, Thomas and Betsy worked together to make this quilt for their bed. (Robbing Peter to Pay Paul is the name of the quilt block pattern. The effect is created by starting with a square of cloth, cutting a wedge from each side, then exchanging them with those of the alternate color.)*



© IRI, COURTESY OF EMMA ALLEBES

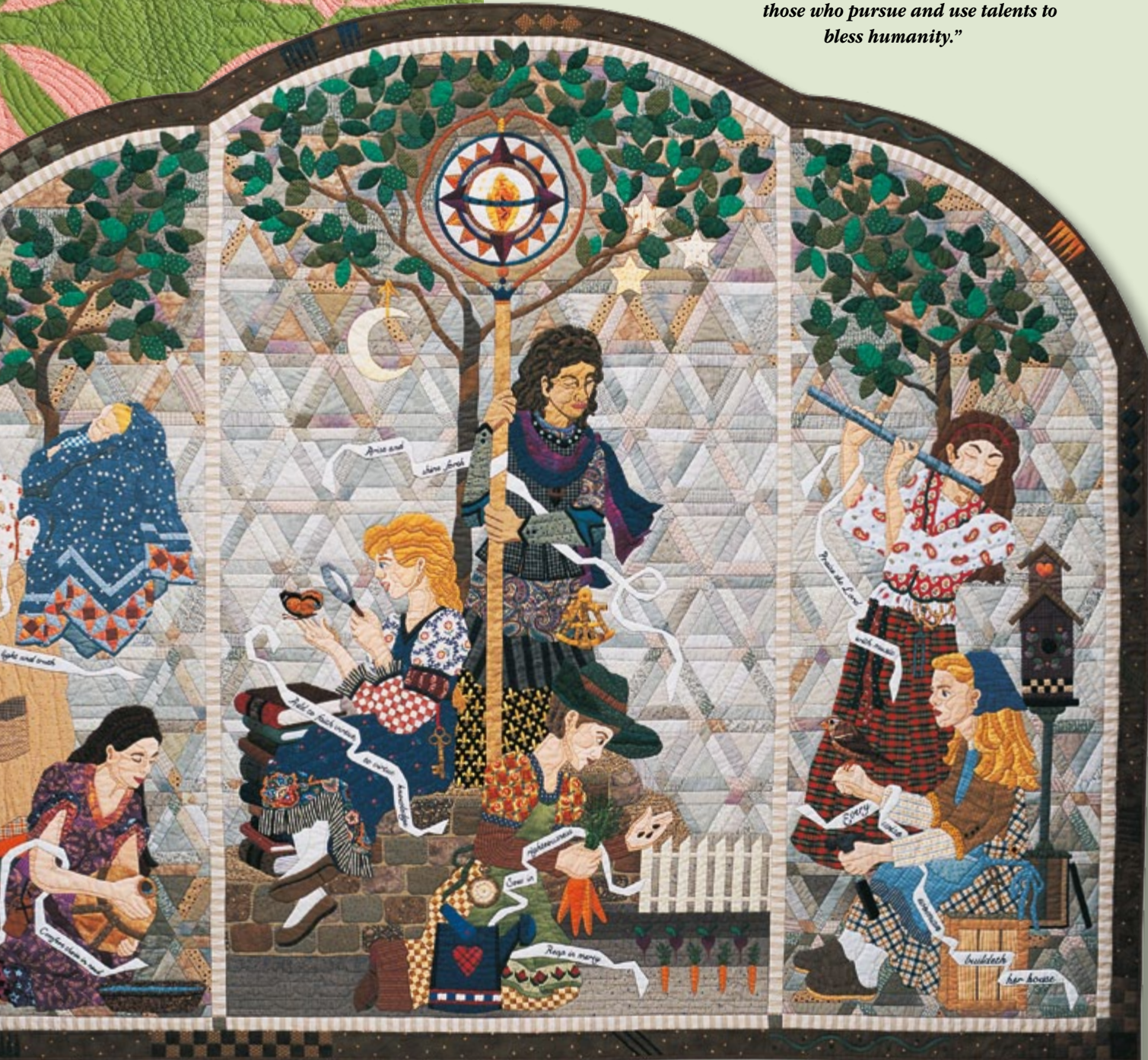
▲ *Women of All Nations Nurturing Peace, 1996, by Emma Allebes. Like the women depicted in this Scandinavian-influenced quilt, women all over the world move across the earth, extending the reach of human ties. As their identities (shown in their skirts) shift from the farm woman (on the left) to the modern woman (on the right), these women nurture people throughout the world. Bird motifs represent the peace the women bring into the world.*



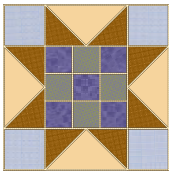
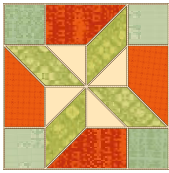
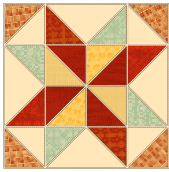


COLLECTED BY PAULI BULLOCK BEARD;
DONATED BY PAULINE BEARD HILLS

▼ **Angel's Portion: Seeking Virtue, 2002, by Jodi Warner.** Depicted in this story quilt are seven heroic figures, each shown in an active pursuit of virtue. Each of these women possesses a trait that can be shared with others to bless humanity: sentinel, scholar, gardener, nurturer, caregiver, musician, and home builder. The artist explains that these women "honor those who pursue and use talents to bless humanity."



© JODI WARNER. DO NOT COPY



▶ *Detail from To All Worthy Male Members, 1990, by Emma Allebes. On June 8, 1978, the Church announced to the world that all faithful, worthy male members could receive the priesthood, making it possible for men of every race and nationality to share in this responsibility. In commemoration of this declaration, Sister Allebes physically traced the right hands, held at the square, of 24 priesthood bearers from around the world and pieced them together in this story quilt. She used 24 African printed fabrics.*



EMMA ALLEBES, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM



▲ *Hmong Traditional Life (story cloth), after 1970, created by Hmong women. An understanding of one's cultural heritage contributes to a sense of identity. Through migrations, wars, and refugee camps, traditional Hmong needlework has served as a reminder to the Hmong people of where they have come from and who they are. A traditional story cloth uses images to preserve family history, community traditions, and recent or historic events. This story cloth depicts daily tasks and rituals.*

© IRI, COURTESY OF TONG LOR LEE



▲ *Russian Quilt of Testimonies, 1997, quilt blocks created by Relief Society sisters in Ufa, Russia. Each of the blocks was later pieced together and quilted by sisters in the Harrisville Seventh Ward, Harrisville Utah Stake, USA.*

COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM