

SUNRISE

By Don Jensen

This life is not the end; there is much beauty and happiness and joy to come.

The winter morning was clear and cold in the predawn hours as I began the morning chores on my dairy farm. My mind was heavy as I reflected on the events of the past week. Tragedy had struck our small valley. An old high school friend of mine, along with his young son, his teenage daughter, and three of her friends, had been killed in a terrible car crash. My children had been friends with the girls in the accident. Our family, and many others, had spent the week grieving this tragedy along with the families involved. We had attended three funerals already that week and would be attending the

final funeral, for the father and his two children, today.

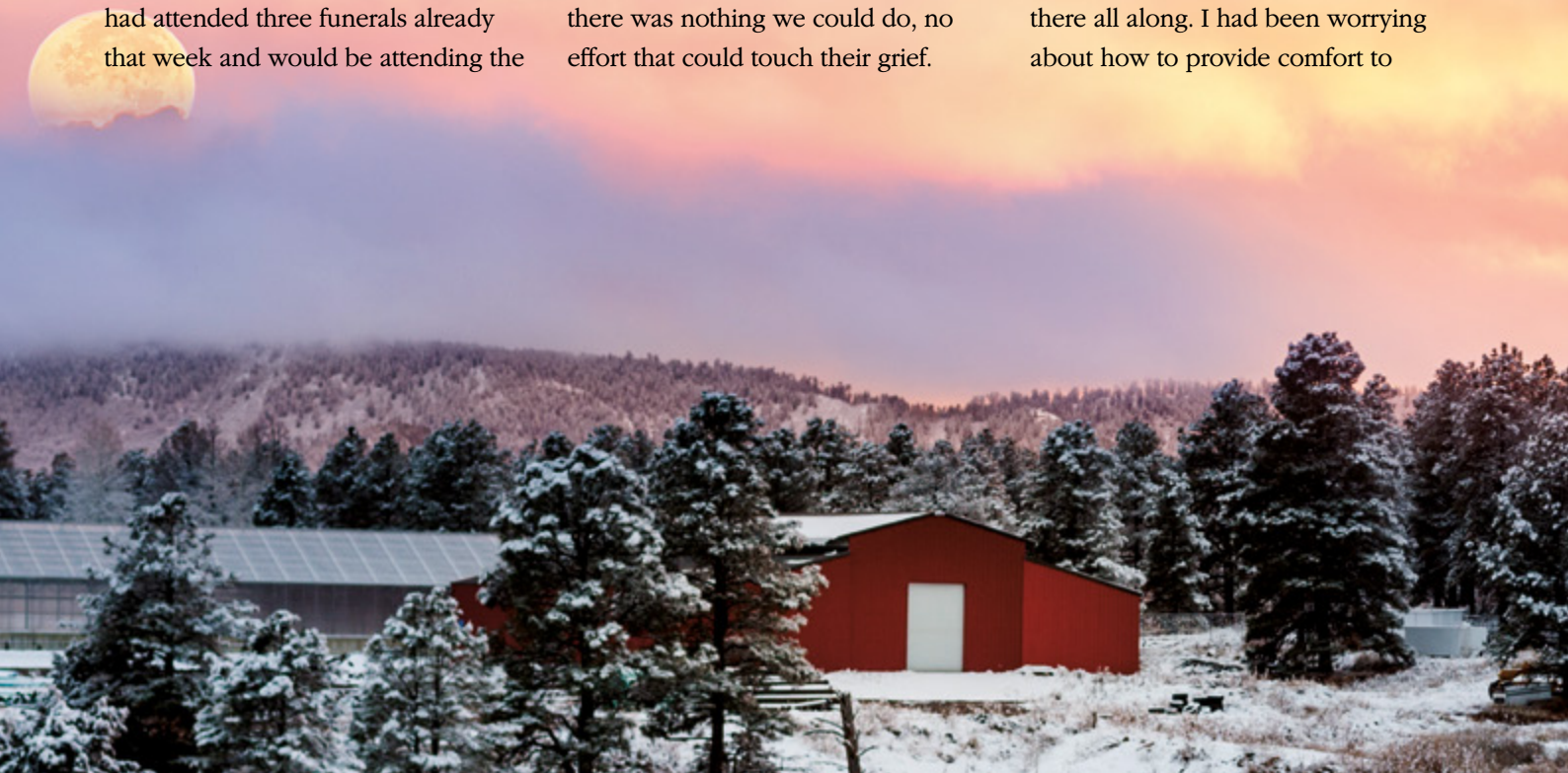
I was struggling with two main questions as I came to terms with what had happened.

First, I grieved for and wondered why these young children would be taken before they got to experience so much that life has to offer. They would not grow up, marry, serve missions, have children, and experience so many other joys of mortal life.

Secondly, although I felt that we as a community wanted so much to offer comfort to the families, it seemed that there was nothing we could do, no effort that could touch their grief.

As I worked, I was surprised by a visit from the father-in-law of my friend who had died. As a fellow rancher, where the work never stops, he needed to buy a calf immediately. After the transaction was made, we talked for a while about how he and his family were doing. I voiced to him my wish that I could do something more for them. I felt so helpless to ease their pain. But I was impressed at how calm and peaceful he seemed in spite of what his family was going through.

Suddenly I realized that the answer to one of my questions had been there all along. I had been worrying about how to provide comfort to



my grieving friends, forgetting that true comfort and peace comes from the Holy Ghost. These families were blessed with an added measure of that comfort from Heavenly Father that only He can provide. I knew that they were receiving the Lord's comfort, spoken of in the Book of Mormon:

“He will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause. . . .

“O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever” (Jacob 3:1–2).

After we said goodbye, I stepped out of the barn and noticed the full

moon setting in the western sky. It was a beautiful sight. Then I turned around and saw the sun rising in the east. It was as if the whole sky was alive with color. The setting moon had been lovely; the rising sun was breathtaking. As I paused to think about this contrast, it came to me that no matter how beautiful and happy we think our mortal lives are, they pale in comparison to the beauty and happiness that lies ahead if we are faithful and obedient. I realized that those who had died had not really lost anything. They had been valiant in their life on earth and would be going on to greater experiences and joys.

Later that day, I attended the final funeral with my family. We met that day in an overflowing tabernacle, literally bursting at the seams with the support of an entire community. That day and for some time after, the people of our valley experienced a special peace. Parents held their children a bit closer, and we realized that our earth lives are short and we must express our love to family and friends more often. I was reminded of the Lord's love for us and the beauty of the plan of salvation. This life is not the end; there is much beauty and happiness and joy to come. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.