



He Will Give You Rest

*My heart hurt with hers. I wanted
so much to help her because I felt
that her remorse and her desire
to do right were sincere.*

BY DENNIS L. McDANIEL

ILLUSTRATION BY SAM LAWLOR

I was serving as a missionary when I met Susie (name has been changed). She and her family had been taught the gospel by two missionaries who worked in the mission office with me. They had received all the lessons and had accepted the invitation to be baptized and confirmed. It was my privilege to interview this wonderful family of four: mother, father, younger brother, and Susie.

I had completed the baptismal interviews for the other three family members and had found them wonderfully prepared and excited to be part of the Lord's kingdom. But when Susie walked in, she seemed quiet and somewhat hesitant to meet with me.

I began asking questions about what she had been taught. She knew the story of the Prophet Joseph Smith and believed it; she had read the Book of Mormon and knew it to be true; and she accepted the Church as the only true and living Church on the earth and wanted to be part of it. I asked Susie about her willingness to live the law of tithing, the Word of Wisdom, and other commandments. She said she understood these and was willing to live them for the rest of her life. Indeed, the interview was much like those I had had with the rest of her family.

Then I asked, "Can you tell me what the law of chastity is?" Her countenance immediately changed. I quickly recognized this must be why she seemed hesitant to meet with me. Before I could say anything, she covered her face with both hands, put her face and hands in her lap, and began to sob uncontrollably.

We sat without speaking for several minutes. I was unsure of what to say, and Susie could not stop sobbing. I prayed for the Lord's help and asked Susie what was wrong. She finally lifted her face and told me that several weeks before meeting the missionaries she and her boyfriend had done things the missionaries had taught her were wrong according to the Lord's law. She had already told her boyfriend what she had learned and had told him she would no longer be involved in such a relationship. She had even suggested to him that he meet with the missionaries and hear what she now knew was true. Still, the guilt for having engaged in these acts weighed down her soul.

My heart hurt with hers. I wanted so much to help her

because I felt that her remorse and her desire to do right and be baptized were sincere. At that moment, the answer to my prayer came clearly. I asked her, "Susie, would you like to be free of the guilt and pain of this sin?" Once again her hands covered her face, and her head bowed. She uttered only one word: "Yes." Her tears came even more freely, and I consoled her by talking about the Atonement and how she could apply it to her life. I explained that one purpose of baptism and confirmation is to heal the souls of those who are sincere in repentance, and without question I found her to be sincere.

We completed the interview with a prayer. The Spirit of the Lord was clearly present, more powerfully than I had ever before felt in an interview.

My companion and I arrived at the chapel shortly before the baptism. There was no time to speak to Susie or her family prior to the service. After the singing and the talks, they were baptized—first her mother, then her father, then her brother, and finally Susie. She walked down into the font, and her smile told the story—the healing balm of the Master was working in her heart. As she came out of the water, tears were in her eyes and mine. Her smile was even bigger than before, and her countenance was radiant. I understood at that moment why the Savior taught, "Come unto me, all ye that . . . are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

We spoke only briefly after the service. I welcomed the family as new members of the Lord's kingdom. As I shook Susie's hand, I wanted to tell her how much this experience had meant to me. I had repented in my life and felt the power of the Atonement, but I was grateful to have felt it more powerfully than ever before because of my association with her.

Joining the Church is a challenge in and of itself. Joining under such personally strained circumstances had to be an even greater challenge for Susie, as it is for many new members. But the Atonement of Jesus Christ made the challenge surmountable and led this wonderful daughter of God to conversion and a healing of the soul. It also taught an impressionable young missionary an important lesson about applying the Atonement in his own life. ■