

FINANCES: OATMEAL, BREAD, AND RICE AND BEANS

My husband's graduate school had been expensive, so we looked forward to a job that would help us pay off our debts. We were offered several positions but felt best about a professorship in Hawaii. However, when our contract arrived, the salary was lower than we had discussed. We were informed that there was a new policy and negotiation was not an option. We had felt sure about the new job, so we signed the contract anyway.

We loved Hawaii, my husband loved his job, and we were blessed as a family. Things seemed to be going well with our student-debt payments until the credit card company informed us that our new interest rate would be 14 percent instead of our current 3 percent. We argued that we always made our payments on time and that had paid down a lot of the debt already. But the company was adamant.

First, we did some creative financing, transferring our balance to different credit cards with short-term zero percent interest rates. Then we started cutting costs. We drastically reduced our food, clothing, and diapers budget for our seven-person family. We lived on our food storage. Every morning we ate oatmeal; every afternoon we ate homemade bread; and every evening we ate rice and beans. There were no luxuries such as butter, fresh milk, or juice. After we paid tithing and basic expenses, all of our income went to paying off our credit cards.

Six months later, we had paid off 90 percent of our debt! The Lord had multiplied our income in miraculous ways. We were able to quickly pay off the remaining debt, and we are very thankful. My daughter still complains about when she had to eat oatmeal every morning, but I know that by paying our tithing and obeying the prophet, we were blessed financially and temporally. ■

Name withheld, Hawaii, USA



Things seemed to be going well with our student-debt payments until the credit card company informed us that our interest rate was going up.