

*with Our Councils: Learning to Minister Together in the Church and in the Family* [1997], 55). “All who qualify for [temple sealing and eternal family] blessings will, in the Lord’s due time, have them here or in the next life” (Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69).

17. Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 7:3; see also Moses 1:6.
18. Moses 7:21.
19. Mosiah 3:19.
20. Alma 13:2, 16; Doctrine and Covenants 107:3.
21. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79; 121:46.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–42.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45.
24. See Alma 13:12.
25. Matthew 5:37.

26. Doctrine and Covenants 121:46.

27. See Moses 1:39.

28. “As the Dew from Heaven Distilling,” *Hymns*, no. 149.

### President Monson

The choir and congregation will now sing “Come, Ye Children of the Lord.” Then Elders Don R. Clarke, Keith R. Edwards, and Larry W. Gibbons of the Seventy will address us. Following their remarks, we shall hear from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

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The choir and congregation sang  
“Come, Ye Children of the Lord.”

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## Elder Don R. Clarke

### Help for a blind farmer

My maternal grandfather, Alma Benjamin Larsen, was only 34 years old when he woke up one morning and noticed that he had problems seeing. Shortly thereafter, he lost his sight entirely. Grandfather had served a mission and been a faithful member of the Church. He was a farmer with a wife and three children, and he could not imagine life without sight. Grandfather’s wife and small children now had to bear the extra burdens of helping on the farm, and money became tight.

During this time of physical darkness, many people became instruments in God’s hands to help my blind grandfather. One experience that had a powerful impact on his family happened in 1919. It was a year of great financial difficulty for all the people in Grandfather’s town. Farms were being foreclosed, and businesses were going broke. There was a sizable mortgage on his farm, and Grandfather received a statement saying he would have to pay

\$195 in order to carry the mortgage over for another year. For him, paying this bill was like demanding a pound of flesh. Nearly everyone was in the same condition, and it seemed impossible to obtain that much money. If he had gathered everything that the farm produced—the horses, cows, and machinery—he could not have sold them for \$195. Grandfather asked a neighbor to butcher two or three of his cows, and he sold them and some other products. He had extended credit to his neighbors with the understanding that they would pay at the end of the year, but none of his debtors was able to pay him. The economic situation for his family was bleak.

In his journal, Grandfather recounts: “I shall never forget that cold evening, just before Christmas of 1919. It looked as though we would lose the farm. My daughter, Gladys, laid a slip of paper in my hand and said, ‘This came in the mail today.’ I took it to her mother and asked her what it was. This is what my wife read to me,

‘Dear Brother Larsen, I’ve had you on my mind all day today. I am wondering if you are in financial trouble. If you are, I have \$200 you may have.’ The letter was signed ‘Jim Drinkwater.’ Jim was a small, crippled man, and he would have been the last man on earth that anyone would have thought had that much money on hand. I went to his house that night and he said, ‘Brother Larsen, I received a wireless message from heaven this morning, and I could not get you off my mind all day. I was sure you were in financial trouble.’ Brother Drinkwater gave me \$200 and we sent the \$195 to the mortgage company, and with the extra \$5 we bought boots and clothes for the children. Santa Claus did come that year.”

My grandfather then goes on to bear his testimony: “The Lord has never let me down. He has touched the hearts of others as He touched the heart of Brother Drinkwater. I bear witness that the only safety and security that I have ever found has come through trying to keep the commandments of the Lord and upholding and sustaining the authorities of this Church.”

### **Becoming instruments in God’s hands**

I have thought about Jim Drinkwater many times and wondered how he came to be one that the Lord could trust. Jim was a little, crippled man that God trusted to help a blind farmer with a heavy mortgage and three children. I have learned a great deal from my grandfather’s experience with Jim Drinkwater. I have learned that a person does not need to have a Church calling, an invitation to help someone, or even good health to become an instrument in God’s hands. How then do you and I become instruments in God’s hands? The prophets and the scriptures teach us how.

### *Have love for God’s children*

First of all, we must have love for God’s children. When the lawyer asked

the Savior, “Master, which is the great commandment?” the Savior replied:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:36–39).

Joseph F. Smith said: “Charity, or love, is the greatest principle in existence. If we can lend a helping hand to the oppressed, if we can aid those who are dependent and in sorrow, if we can uplift and ameliorate the condition of mankind, it is our mission to do it, it is an essential part of our religion to do it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1917, 4). When we feel love for God’s children, we are given opportunities to help them in their journey back to His presence.

### *Be willing to do what is uncomfortable*

The missionary experiences of the sons of Mosiah also help us understand how to become instruments in God’s hands. “And it came to pass that they journeyed many days in the wilderness” (Alma 17:9). We must be willing to journey. The sons of Mosiah were willing to step outside their surroundings and do that which was uncomfortable. Had Ammon not been willing to journey into a foreign land, inhabited by a wild and a hardened and a ferocious people, he never would have found and helped Lamoni and his father, and many Lamanites may have never learned about Jesus Christ. God has asked us to journey, go on missions, accept callings, invite someone to church, or help someone in need.

### *Fast and pray*

In their pursuit to help their Lamanite brothers, the sons of Mosiah also learned the importance of fasting and prayer: “They fasted much and prayed much that

the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth” (Alma 17:9). Do we really want to be instruments in God’s hands? If so, our desire will permeate our prayers and be the focus of our fasts.

After losing his eyesight, my grandfather fasted and prayed that if he was to remain in darkness, the Lord would give him peace. He states that almost within the hour “my mind was enlightened and the cloud of darkness had lifted from me.” He could see again, not with physical eyes, but spiritual eyes. Later, Alma Benjamin Larsen was called to be a patriarch, where he served for 32 years. Like the sons of Mosiah, my grandfather fasted and prayed, and as a result, he was given the opportunity to bless thousands of God’s children.

#### *Be receptive to promptings*

We, like Jim Drinkwater and my grandfather, also need to be receptive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, for when we desire to be an instrument in the hands of God, we can receive revelation. The prophet Alma the Younger tells us of revelations that he received: “I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. . . . Yea, and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to re-

pentance; and this is my joy” (Alma 29:9). Alma had received revelation of what to do.

I have a little book that I carry with me, where I record the inspiration and thoughts that I receive from the Spirit. It does not look like much, and it becomes worn out and needs to be replaced from time to time. As thoughts come to my mind, I write them down and then I try to do them. I have found that many times, as I have done something on my list, my action was the answer to someone’s prayer. There have also been those times that I didn’t do something on my list, and I have found out later that there was someone I could have helped, but I didn’t. When we receive promptings regarding God’s children, if we write down the thoughts and inspiration we receive and then obey it, God’s confidence in us increases and we are given more opportunities to be instruments in His hands.

In the words of President Faust: “You can be powerful instruments in the hands of God to help bring about this great work. . . . You can do something for another person that no one else ever born can do” (“Instruments in the Hands of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 115). God treasures those who help His children. I invite all of us to follow the counsel of the prophets and become instruments in the hands of God and be among His treasures because we have helped His children.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Keith R. Edwards

### **Approach suffering with focus on Christ**

The Choir has sung “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee.”<sup>1</sup> In the Book of Mormon, Nephi, speaking messianically, prophesies:

“And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of

naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.”<sup>2</sup>

The great and exquisite suffering of the Savior was for us, to keep us from hav-