

PURE RELIGION

Laura's Story

Laura grew up in a small town. Her parents were faithful members of the Church. She, herself, had been active in the Church until just before college. But that's when things changed drastically for her. She moved away to go to school and began to live recklessly. She drank and went to parties and, consequently, failed her classes. But it wasn't until Laura found out she was pregnant that another realization distilled upon her—she had failed in something far more important than her classes at school. She had failed to keep the commandments of God and heed the teachings and pleadings of her parents.

The realization that she was going to have a baby had a sobering effect on Laura. She knew the news would be difficult for her parents and her friends. But most of all, it was difficult for her. One thing was clear: she knew she had to change. Laura approached both her family and bishop and began the process of repentance.

Instead of being judgmental and condemning, her parents were loving and helpful. When the birth father told Laura he would not support her or the child, Laura's parents again opened their home for her to stay as long as she needed. All they asked was that she visit LDS Family Services and talk over her situation with a counselor first. Laura agreed, and the date was set.

The decision to keep or place a child for adoption is always a difficult one. But the more Laura considered her circumstances, the more she felt prompted to take the latter course. In the first place, her baby wouldn't have a father to help care for and protect her—that had been made perfectly clear. Second, Laura knew she wasn't prepared to be a mother. And even though her parents would help her raise the

child, she wondered if doing so would be fair to her baby or to them.

The more she thought, the more she understood that doing what was best for her baby just might be the hardest thing for her to do—she would place her baby for adoption.

When she informed LDS Family Services of her decision, she asked if she could play a part in choosing the family who would adopt her baby.

The answer, of course, was yes. Laura was a musician and wondered if it would be possible to place her baby with parents who were musically inclined. She wondered if she could find a mother who stayed at home with her children. She also hoped she could place the child with a couple who shared her love of the outdoors. After reviewing the confidential information sheets and letters from numerous couples, Laura narrowed her decision down to two. How could she choose?

Along with her parents, Laura prayed for the answer. It was a wonderful experience relearning how to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit. After much soul-searching, Laura received her answer.

She asked if she could meet the prospective couple without exchanging identifying information. When she did, the last of her doubts vanished. She knew this was what her Heavenly Father wanted her to do.

Today, Laura is active in the Church. She is working, going to school, and taking an institute of religion class. She is no longer at odds with her mother and father, and she has chosen friends who will help her live the gospel.

Although it has been a long, arduous journey, Laura is happy once again. Laura's parents beam when they talk of her. And a very special couple, who love music and the outdoors, have opened their arms and their hearts to a very special child.

