

PURE RELIGION

Ministering to Angels

When Brother and Sister Yorgason held Charity in their arms for the first time, they knew she was an answer to prayer. They had felt impressed for some time that they should adopt a child. With the help of LDS Social Services, it became possible. But this was no ordinary adoption, for Charity was no ordinary child. Charity was born with only a brain stem; the rest of her brain was missing. Doctors predicted that she would be unable to experience any of her senses. She would know nothing of what was going on around her, would never have control over her body, would never experience or be able to express joy, happiness, or love. She would live her life in a vegetative state and would probably not survive beyond 18 months. But in spite of that, the Yorgasons felt they were meant to provide a home for her.

Not long after they took her in, they began to notice that Charity did feel and respond to pain, intense pain. Over many months, 11 surgeries were needed to insert shunts into her tiny head to drain excessive fluid and reduce the pressure. Only a parent who has spent agonizing and sleepless nights with a sick child can know the feelings of helplessness it brings. At times, family members sat and rocked, or stood and paced, and prayed fervently that the pain might end. At times, simple lullabies brought relief as Charity—who was not supposed to be able to hear—stopped crying and, with wide-open eyes, lay still in their arms, taking in every sound. Sister Yorgason, in a letter to one of her children, wrote, “In the morning, when she is well rested, if we go in and call her name very

quietly, she will give the sweetest smile in the whole world. . . . Of course, her doctors don’t believe she is really smiling, but they haven’t seen it.” Charity loved to be held and cuddled, she fussed if she didn’t get her bottle, and she enjoyed baths. More and more her radiant smile—from a baby who was not supposed to be able to respond socially—was a sought-after reward.



Charity lived to be almost eight. At the end, the family reported that for several days, Charity, “smiled and laughed and carried on with us and with whoever else came near.” Brother Yorgason later wrote, “Looking back now, I am dumbfounded that we didn’t understand the significance of Charity’s joy. For seven years and ten months she had successfully taught and blessed the lives of her family and countless others, spreading happiness and love to all who would receive it. With incredible courage she had run her mortal race, passed the test of physical pain and suffering, and endured to the end.”

Years earlier, when the Yorgasons took Charity to the temple to have her sealed to them for time and all eternity, the temple officiator stated, “In our Church we believe in the ministering of angels. It would be interesting to know why you and your family have been selected to minister to one.”

(The story is provided with permission of Blaine and Kathy Yorgason. Quotations and information are excerpted from *One Tattered Angel* by Blaine M. Yorgason.)