

# PURE RELIGION

## The Warmth of Love

JoAnn Shields calls it a place of misery—the location where only the desperate and miserable live. When she approached the apartment, she noticed the cracked walls and broken windows. It was cold outside. Terribly cold. But she had heard there was a family here that might need help, so she knocked on the door.

The door opened, and when Sister Shields walked inside she discovered the Marshall family—a mother and five children—huddled together in a corner of the room on an old mattress, trying to stay warm as an icy wind blew snow from the outside into the apartment. The previous tenant had not paid the electric bill, and the landlord had refused to settle with the utility company, so there was no electricity. No light. No heat.

A single extension cord ran from the Marshalls' apartment to a neighbor's. The neighbor had agreed to "share" the electricity for \$50 a month.

Only a few days before, a man had come to the door collecting rent. Sister Marshall gave him the \$800 she had scrimped and saved so that her children would have a place to stay. Later, she discovered the man was a fraud and the rent remained to be paid.

Helping the unfortunate is something Sister Shields has made a habit of doing. Earlier in her life, she had traveled to India where she had the opportunity to visit with Mother Theresa. "In one fell swoop, all my silly notions about the

poor fell away and I realized that every man, woman, and child is a brother and a sister—a child of our Heavenly Father," she said.

So, when JoAnn Shields graduated from BYU law school and accepted a position in Salt Lake, she intentionally moved into the inner city. She wanted to be where she could be of service to others. And standing in that cold, dark room, she knew she could be of service to the Marshall family.



She contacted the bishop, who immediately organized the members and the resources of the Church. The Relief Society ensured that the family had food to eat. The elders patched up the holes in her windows so that the house would be warm. It wasn't long before a new home was found—one that was safe and warm. Members of the ward donated beds and dressers and other furnishings. Sister Marshall had a number of legal problems, many of which stemmed from her obligations to an unscrupulous landlord, and Sister Shields volunteered to help at no charge.

In a short time, the lives of Sister Marshall and her five children were transformed.

"I have never seen the face of the Savior," Sister Shields says, "but I have seen the Savior in the faces of the people we serve."

Perhaps if you asked Sister Marshall and her five children, they would say they have seen the Savior in the faces of those who helped them.