

The Small Plates of Karen

Begun March 1985

Introduction

I was one day pondering the scripture about the small plates of Nephi, when I was struck with this thought:

What a wonderful spiritual legacy it would be to my descendants if I would glean from my life's experiences the most uplifting and spiritual things and record them in a book similar to Nephi's.

Thus, you have before you the “Small Plates of Karen”.

I know your children will hold your words as having special significance for them, too.

Leave them a legacy.

Service Opportunities in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1. My first position in the Church was Ward Organist at age 14, though actually I was the Ward pianist as we didn't have an organ
2. Missionary in the Franco-Belgian Mission, 1966-1968
3. Counselor in Relief Society Presidency at BYU, 1969
4. Gospel Doctrine Teacher in Singles Ward in Salt Lake City, 1971
5. Merry Miss Primary teacher, 1972
6. Sunday School teacher for 11 year old children, 1973
7. Activities Committee Chairman, and 15, 16 year old Sunday School teacher, Parley's 4th Ward, 1974
8. Activities Committee Chairman for Brookwood Ward, Oregon, 1975
9. Gospel Doctrine teacher for Dawson Creek Ward (2 years)
10. Relief Society teacher in Dawson Creek Ward
11. Young Women's Counselor in Hillsboro Stake
12. Young Women President, Dawson Creek Ward, 1996-1998
13. Relief Society President, Dawson Creek Ward, 1999-2003
14. Stake Missionary, 1997-1998
15. Ward Organist, 1999-present
16. Ward Missionary, 2003
17. Temple ordinance worker, December 2002-present
18. Ward choir accompanist
19. Full-time Temple Missionary (Guatemala), 2005-2007
20. Church service missionary in Tualatin Spanish Branch, 2007-2008
21. Primary Teacher (6 year olds) with Brent, 2009

22. Ward Welfare Specialist with Brent
23. Ward Organist, Relief Society
24. Quilt Specialist, 2010
25. Teacher with Brent in Marriage and Family Relations Class. 2010
26. 16 and 17 year old Sunday School Teacher, 2012

March 1985

“I, Karen, having been born of goodly parents...having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days...therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.”

As with Nephi, in this book I will write the “things of my soul”. “Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord, and my heart pondereth (many times) upon the things which I have seen and heard”.

This book contains a record of spiritual experiences most sacred and meaningful to me. These are experiences which I have rarely, or never, shared with anyone else but you, dear reader. I record them for your benefit and mine, for in re-living spiritual experiences comes increased awareness of the reality of God and His concern for us.

I do not recall any special spiritual experiences before I reached my 14th birthday. I do recall once, at age 12, trying to read the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. I guess I had a Mutual assignment. I was supposed to read this section and tell about it. After a few pages I put the book away where it was kept in our bookshelf. I couldn't understand it. I recall a profound feeling of disappointment and confusion. On another occasion I was wondering if I was keeping the commandments of God? Was I a sinful person? What exactly *were* the commandments? How could I find them and read them to determine if I was keeping them?

As I look back on this experience today (2012) I am struck by the importance of following the counsel given by today's prophets to hold family scripture study, Family Home Evening and family prayer. I came from a good family, but we did not do these things. A child today as unprepared as I was would not survive Satan's flood of evil deception that has covered the earth.

By the time I reached the age of 14, I became more interested in spiritual things and began to seek the Lord on my own.

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The first experience I can remember distinctly was one I had at this time which showed me that the Lord would reveal knowledge and truth to me if I sought it diligently and believed the Lord would help me.

At this time I had some questions in my mind about the fate of those who did not marry in this life, especially in regards to the necessity of being married in the Temple in this life. I went to bed and prayed diligently to the Lord (Heavenly Father, that is) concerning the answer to this question. Finally, into my mind came the thought that provision would be made after this life for those who couldn't marry in the Temple on earth. I fell asleep satisfied that I had the answer to my question. The next day was Sunday. Guess what subject was covered in my Sunday School lesson! The same answer was given there to the question I had asked the Lord the night before. I felt this was a confirmation of the personal revelation I had received.

During this period of my life I prayed diligently to Heavenly Father. I tried to keep the "reality of God" in my mind, as that had been impressed on me by the Spirit. I wanted to remember him at all times. I can remember stopping my household chores to pray for the Spirit of the Lord to be with me, and He would answer with a sweet, warm feeling in my heart that said that he was there and he heard me.

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One of the most sacred experiences I have had occurred at this early period of my life. I had read the Book of Mormon through, and had heard others talk about putting Moroni's promise recorded in Moroni 10:4 to the test. I decided that I was taking for granted the fact that the Book of Mormon was true and that I needed to ask the Lord for a spiritual confirmation of the feelings I already had about the book.

So thinking, I betook myself to bed for the night and commended to ask the Lord to confirm for me the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. All of a sudden a power came over me which filled me from head to toe with a burning, all-consuming sensation, and it shook me like a leaf fluttering in the wind.

I felt much like Nephi's rebellious brothers when they were shaken by the power of God. At length, I asked the Lord to stop this experience. It was enough...a direct answer to a promise given to those who seek a testimony honestly and with faith.

During this time, just before entering college, my testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel was growing. I found my testimony was based on 2 things: first, the Church was doctrinally logical and understandable, and secondly, everything done in the Church was done excellently. That is, no cost spared, talents used to the fullest, quality productions, publications, speakers, etc. These things all led me to feel the powerful *goodness* that emanated from the Gospel (see Omni:25). I was attracted to that goodness and wanted to be a part of it.

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It was not until I entered college and took a Book of Mormon class from Glen Pearson that I gained by spiritual testimony of the restoration of the Gospel. It was in studying the Book of Mormon that the Spirit manifest its truthfulness to me. We had to read so many pages every week for this class. My teacher's discussions on the reading were inspiring and motivating to me. As I read the book, the spirit spoke out of the pages to me and just filled me with joy and the love of God. I remember what a joy it was to have confirmed in my heart by the Spirit the things I had always believed. They really were true! Joseph Smith was a prophet. He restored the true church. Priesthood authority is now upon the earth. God is real.

I felt truly born again at this time. It was a transformation of my life paradigms. My feet were set on the path of discipleship and I was determined not to deviate. I felt as if my baptismal covenants had finally taken effect. I could “see” with greater clarity and feel with greater depth of understanding than I could in the past.

I felt love for everyone I met. The Lord was in my life and my life was full of light.

AS I look back on these experiences of over 50 years ago, I can see the relevance of Alma 32 in that this was a time of “seed planting” for me. The rest of my life has been spent watering the seed and caring for the seedling. The maturing tree has become stronger with experience and the tender mercies of the Lord have sustained me and given me nourishment so that the tree can grow stronger and continue to reach heavenward.

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BYU was a wonderful experience. I wanted to attend UCLA and go to medical school, but my parents were wiser in encouraging me to go to BYU. They thought that that was the place to find a good husband for their daughter, but I found much more there that *prepared* me to be a wife and a mother. The Devotionals, testimony meetings, special associations with friends and teachers just filled by cup of spiritual idealism to overflowing. I can remember thinking during many meetings held in the Smith Fieldhouse that I would probably forget the words that were spoken there, but I never wanted to forget the feelings I felt there. What a feeling of greatness and power to be united with others in the pure joy of listening to the word of testimony, the word of knowledge, the word of the love of God. If I had not attended BYU I don't know where my path in life would have taken me.

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While I was at BYU my roommate, Suzanne Hall, was facing some serious questions in her life. Particularly, should she marry the fellow she was dating at the time? She decided a Patriarchal Blessing was the thing that would help provide the answer for her. I decided to have my blessing at the same time.

I fasted for a day and a half to help get myself in tune with the Spirit.

Patriarch Urvin Gee gave me my blessing. He was quite old, and I felt the power of his Priesthood as he placed his hand upon my head. I was so moved to feel the Spirit of the Lord testify to me that the words he was speaking were from the Lord and they were about *me*.

The Lord knew me and had important things to tell me.

I was important. I could help him and help others. The words of counsel and comfort in that blessing have grown in significance through the years. He told me I was literally the daughter of my heavenly parents, just as much as a daughter of my earthly parents. That knowledge and comfort sustained me on my mission in later years. I would often reflect on “the reality of God”, and knowing that I was his beloved daughter made that reality tangible.

My blessing states that I would “know that Jesus is my personal Savior and that I would be able to “bear testimony of that fact to other people”. Of course this promise was based on my obedience and faithfulness, but I can feel the vitality and reality of that gift as it fills my soul. That testimony is a gift of God to be used for the benefit of others. He said I would serve in the mission field and do Temple work,. These words planted in my heart a desire to go on a mission. I can still remember how the thought of going on a mission filled the void in my life at that time. I was 23 years old. It was the right time for me. I recall the phone conversation I had with my parents as I talked to them from my apartment at BYU. I told them I wanted to come home in order to prepare to go on a mission. Dad and mom were startled and wanted to know if that was really what I wanted to do. They weren't so enthusiastic as I expected them to be. But, come home I did, and I decided to *[work as an]* intern as a Medical Technologist at Valley Presbyterian Hospital as a Medical Technologist in order to earn money for my mission. (I think my folks hoped I would graduate from BYU with a Mrs. degree).

At this time I also considered going to medical school and had forms and applications from several, but I remember clearly one day that the thought came to my mind that I couldn't be a mother and a doctor, so I had to choose which one I wanted right then. I opted for having a family and from that point began making plans for going on my mission.

My brother and I planned on leaving at the same time, as our dad was Bishop and we wanted to leave while he was Bishop. Craig and I had the last Sacrament Meeting farewell in our ward, as the Church had decided such things were to be done away with.

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I will tell you of two special revelations I had in relation to my family, one sad, the other happy. I'll take the sad one first.

One day the thought came into my mind and heart with great clarity that the daughter that we might have had after Jeffrey was going to another family. It was her time to come to earth and it could be delayed no longer. Brent and I had decided that 5 children was all we could handle. I would have loved one more and had received a personal revelation before I had Jeffrey that our next two children would be a boy and a girl. However, I was 38 at the time I had Jeffrey and I was concerned about my health and the possibility of having a mentally deficient child if we had another when I was over 40. I felt very sad, and so did Brent when I told him of that feeling I had that this girl-child had been born to another family, and we realized that we should have made the decision whether or not to have more children based on prayer, not just physical concerns. Now I feel that there is a gap in our family...that we are missing one who should be there and I am sad.

The happy revelation occurred one night at 11:30 when I was sitting up holding Michael when he was a new baby of 1-2 months. I was in the kitchen of our home on Wilmington Avenue in Salt Lake City watching some late night program because Michael would not go to sleep before midnight. As I was holding him I was flooded with an overwhelming sense of joy unlike anything I had felt before because it filled my very being. It warmed me from my head to my toes. The feeling was in relation to this child in my arms.

I have reflected upon this experience many times, and have come to the conclusion that that inexpressible joy I felt was a foretaste of the feelings we will have for all our posterity as we rejoice together in humble gratitude in the Celestial Kingdom of our Father and Savior. All of our pains and sacrifices will be swallowed up in this joy which has been purchased through the precious blood of our Savior.

Some Thoughts on the Temple

June-July 1990

The Temple is the nearest place to Heaven on this earth. It is a place of revelation and learning that is facilitated by its sacred dedication for that purpose. However, your body is a temple too and you may obtain just as many private revelations and much comfort in your own personal place of prayer.

There is one other important thing, the Temple is a place of covenants. There is no other place on earth to make these sacred covenants with God. Think what a blessing it is to know that you and Heavenly Father have promised each other certain things...to actually know that God is real and that He has given His Priesthood power to men on earth.

Those who attend the Temple regularly receive many blessings, one of which is a special peace in this world of turmoil and a strength to endure the challenges well. The time has come when the Temple is a sanctuary and when we do wish to be able to take our children inside with us to protect them from the evil and violence on the outside.

As for my Temple experiences, I have seen no angels, but have felt the joy and peace of the presence of my Father in Heaven in that sacred place. To walk through the Temple doors or even on the grounds brings a flood of remembrance to my soul of the sociability we enjoyed in the presence of Father before we came to this earth. The love and kindness in service of those who are found in the Temple fills me with a joy and peace unknowable elsewhere.

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The Kirtland Temple

A thought about my visit to the Kirtland Temple in 1988:

As I walked through the front doors on a tour guided by a member of the Reorganized Church, I was forcefully struck by the spirit of those who had so lovingly built this beautiful building. It was as if a partial understanding of the feelings of love, sacrifice and devotion to the great cause that the builders were involved in came over me. I sat in the main assembly hall and marveled at how the building was full of a glorious light, exactly as a Temple is a source of light to those who use it. The windows were so beautifully crafted and placed so well that in a day when there was no electricity available it would still have allowed the feeling of great light within the room.

To think of the transcendent events which occurred in that room brought tears to my eyes and I could not help but weep as I thought of the great dedication day and the singing of the hymn, "The Spirit of God", from the choir placed in the 4 corners of the room. It must have been an astounding experience. The spiritual manifestations which

followed were such a joyous herald to the opening of this final dispensation. The power of God would be denied no more!

Tender feelings were evoked as I looked upon the pulpit where the Lord had stood and thought of Joseph and Oliver there praying and the glorious vision they beheld as the ancient prophets visited them.

I reflect upon how curious it is that things of great import and spiritual significance to some are passed by as a thing of no consequence by the many. As I sat there on the tour, overwhelmed with my reflections and feelings, the tour guide and his listeners were dispassionately discussing the fact that this was indeed an old pioneer building. There it stands, by the side of a busy road, its greatness unperceived by others as they pass by.

How much in spiritual knowledge and experience is available to us if we will prepare ourselves to recognize it and not pass it by! Visiting the Kirtland Temple was an experience I am grateful for and shall never forget.