

My Father's Hands

By Cheryl Adams Ferguson

April 16, 1988

These are the hands that hoisted hay,
and milked cows
and gathered eggs
on an Idaho farm.

They were browned in the sun
while riding horseback,
hoeing beets,
digging potatoes,
and mending fences
while following in the footsteps of his
father,

Learning from him honest labor and kind
deeds,
the law of the harvest,
and loving service;
treasures to be given to his own
children one day.

With these sweet hands he reached
across a sacred altar
to clasp the hands of my mother,
and thus create an eternal bond.
beginning our forever family.

In these strong and gentle hands
he rocked each of us in infancy,
and brought us up before the Lord.

Through his hands flowed the very power
of God
as he gave us a name and a father's
blessing,
and shook a rattle,
and mended toys
and turned the pages of "Mother
West Wind Why Stories"
and the scriptures.

These are the hands that drove us
miles and miles back to the Idaho
farm
to meet the grandparents
and push the swings at our cousins
homes,
and haul the hay,
and drive the tractor,
and gather the eggs,
and pet the pigs,
and build the memories of our child-
hood.

These are the hands that supported each
of us
as we went down into the waters of
baptism
and lifted us up again - clean and
committed.

The hands that conferred upon us the
Holy Ghost
and blessed us with insight,
instruction, and strength to endure.

These became the hands of bishop
and high councilman.
They lifted and loved and served
and healed and blessed
and encouraged.

These same hands - skilled and tough-
ened-
earned a living through long hours of
patient labor.
They repaired and beautified our
home,
built a swing in the peach tree-
and a tree house too -
so we could swing and climb,
and see the world from a higher
vantage point.

These are the hands of the Priesthood
that I felt
warm and strong upon my head,
bestowing peace and insight
healing and comforting,
always strong.

With these same hands I watched my
father
share the Priesthood circle with my
husband
while he pronounced the blessings
on our little ones,
and bestowed the Holy Ghost upon
the damp heads
of my newly baptized eight year olds.

With these hands he helped us all to
fix our cars and paint our homes,
and pack our things, and say the
closing prayer.

These are the hands that clasped in
prayer
and wiped tears from his eyes
as he gave grateful prayers for the
Lord's abundance-
from his own hospital bed.

These brown and tawny hands
have held up the rest of us through-
out life's trials.
They have clenched and wrung with
growing pain
while his lips pronounced the words
"Don't worry about me, I'm alright."

These same strong hands,
just five months after the doctors
pronounced the verdict "cancer,"
forced down the healthy arms
of several teenage grandchildren
while we all cheered them on in an
arm wrestling match.

And these wonderous hands -
weakened and tired-
continued to serve:
holding doors for nurses,
passing the crackers to mother
first,
inflating the tires of a kind doctor's
car when she came to pay a home
visit.

They patted and shook the hands of all
who came
to visit him
and they left comforted.

These are the hands we held and
stroked
as we tried to rub the pain away.

The beautiful hands that clasped our
own
Until we felt a slow release -
as they reached out
and grasped eternity.

Written by
Cheryl Adams Ferguson

She read this at the funeral of
her Father,
Oleen E Adams
April 16, 1988