

Sunday, March 9, 1980

For several sundays I have tried to sit down and write something about my Father, E. F. Langford, who will be 92 next September.

Mother died 30 May 1966, just one week after Tracy's mother died. Before Mother died, when she was about to enter the hospital for exploratory surgery for ovarian cancer, she said she had been so sure that Dad would die before she did and she worried about how he would get along without her. Dad had been retired for some years and had been helping somewhat about the house, doing vacuuming and all the outside gardening, which had been one of mother's enjoyments.

She never came out of the hospital alive. I went to the hospital to take her home on the 30th of May, and she died of a massive embolism to the lung while I was with her. It was a blessing, in that it spared her weeks, if not months of suffering, as there was nothing we could do but try to ease her suffering until she died.

After her death, Dad took over remarkably well. For a long time he kept the house clean, cooked nutritious breakfasts for himself, but lived largely on frozen dinners for the other meals.

For about the last five years, however, his memory has slipped. Living alone, without any human contact is not the best way for a man to maintain contact with the world. When I say, without human contact, I do not mean that his children did not visit him--they did. The boys lived in Ogden and saw him frequently--Irma and I went up each month. When I went I would clean and buy groceries and wash for him. Then I would put things in the freezer and he would know where to get them. He seemed to be doing fine--but Dad had become very deaf and the deaf withdraw into a world of their own. Even when we visited him he did not seem to communicate well. We started to have a hot meal every day sent in by the Sr. Citizen program. This worked very well for a while and he would get something light for his supper and breakfast.

By Christmas time, 1979, however, Ernie, who had been going in to see him every evening to make sure he was all right, called me and said he was very worried about Dad. He was not eating anything, he said. "Go check the freezer of the frig," I told him, "I can soon tell you if he is eating, because of what is or isn't there. Practically everything I had purchased and put in the freezer or frig was still there. The milk was backing up, and his "hot" meals were sitting around everywhere. I had Ernie make an appointment with the Dr., and I went up the following Tuesday. This was about ten days before Christmas, and I had customarily had Dad down to my home for Christmas. Since this was so far before Christmas, and because he was so unhappy away from his own home, I had not intended to bring him home with me,

which was delivered to the door

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but had intended to return the following Saturday to bring him down for the weekend and Christmas which was on Tuesday.

When I got there, Dad was very weak and ill. I took him to the Dr. in the afternoon. In the morning, I packed his bag, because I decided as soon as I saw him that I was going to take him back with me. He was so weak and dizzy that he almost fainted when I gave him his bath. I was almost afraid he would faint between the car and the Dr.'s office when I took him there. I had cleaned the house and threw away all the food that was around. Dad had diarrhea, and I thought it might be intestinal flu.

The Dr. said he was badly constipated and the problem was that the diarrhea was trying to unplug him. He recommended an enema. I took him home directly from the Dr.'s office.

I had been trying to get Dad to come and live with us for a long time, but he had always refused. Definitely. One time, when his legs were badly infected with Eczema, I told him I was going to take him with me until he got better--and he said, "you can take me--but I'll walk back."

When we got back to Provo, Dad soon indicated to me that he was willing to stay with me. He was very weak and ill. We managed to get him unplugged, but he had one accident with his urine, and seemed to have no control over his bowels. When he did have a B.M., he soiled himself and missed the bathroom.

Elizabeth and Marty and their children were coming up for Christmas so I put Dad in the boy's room while they were here. When they left, I went back to Ogden with Tracy, taking the truck, and Heber and Ernie helped me load his bed, a chair, some of his books, mother's picture and Dad's exercise machine, which I thought he might use if he could get well enough again.

The way he indicated that he was finally willing to come and live with us, was that he never asked when I was going to take him home, and he usually followed me around wanting to know when he was going home. After a week, he finally said "when are you going to take me home?" I put my arms around him, and said: "I'M never going to take you home--this is your home now, and you need me to take care of you." Tears came to his eyes, and he said "I know I need someone to take care of me--but there are some things up there you could use."

After Liz and Marty left, which was about the 28th, as I said before, We went up and moved Dad down. Heber's boy, Michael, had had a very tragic thing happen to his wife. She had had a very bad reaction to anaesthesia after the birth of their child and had sustained much brain damage. Ernie and Heber moved him into Dad's home. He agreed to pay enough to pay the taxes, and agreed to fix and paint the *place*

paint the place, which it badly needed. The roof had been leaking, too. He would pay the utilities, and take care of the place. This worked out well as then we did not have to worry about the place, and it would have needed some work before it could be rented. I insisted upon the stipulation that if Dad insisted, and if his health improved the house would be vacated for him.

I guess he had finally made up his mind that he needed someone, because it was his own idea that I transfer his bank account to Provo, and arrange for his social security to come here. This I did.

We got along just great, but one Sunday Heber came down to visit him--which we all thought was just a great idea. But by that time he was feeling better--and Heber's visit upset the apple-cart--now he remembered his house in Ogden, and wanted to go home with him. He was upset for a week because I let Heber go home without him.

He seems to have settled down now, again, however, and seems to be happy with us. I hope this continues, because he can never be on his own again. He doesn't remember that he has or hasn't eaten, or what time of day it is.

His health has improved remarkably. After six weeks with us he had gained from 130 which he weighed when he came to live with us to 142, which he said was his normal weight. His coloring is better, and he no longer soils himself when he has a B.M. The cracked wheat we have regularly, and the prune juice which he has daily seems to keep him regular and that problem seems to be settled.

It is a problem to know just how much a person ^{should} ~~has to~~ interfere in the life of another. I would hate to have to put him in a home--and he definitely cannot do for himself anymore. I am sure he would be happier with me than in a home, and I do hope that the Lord will bless him for the rest of his days with a reasonable happiness in being with us.

One little note that I would like to make before I stop writing. When I used to go to Ogden to visit him, as I would leave he would take me to the car, open the door and kiss me good-bye. Then he would wait in the drive way until my car went up the hill until he could see me from below on my way home, and we would wave. I feel that we let Dad be independent, which was very important to him, as long as we could. If we could have arranged for someone to live with him and care for him, that might have been one way out--but he needs someone to see that he bathes, and clean him when he has bowel problems. That type of care can only be obtained in a home or in the home of one of his children. I only hope that when my turn comes to be dependent (horrible thought) on one of my children, that they will be as willing as I am to care for me. And that I can take their help graciously. If my senility will let me.