

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

PLEASANT VIEW FIRST WARD

EAST SHARON STAKE

PROVO, UTAH 84601

*Jan 7, 1982*

*Dear Tracy & Elda Rose,*

If you were here to slide around Pleasant View First Ward you couldn't help but notice the largest snowfall of the past thirty years! It just lays about in great mounds cut here and there with boot paths and assorted criss-crossed sled tracks with occasional eight-foot "snow" members of the Ward. I wish ol' Jack Thomas (remember the sunset) could loan me some of his talent so I could weave together words like sparkling, a blue-white glisten, cotton breath clouds, neighbors shoveling shoulder to shoulder with red noses and cheeks, and "Alright you Deacons, that's enough snowballing!" into some mental fabric that could allow you to "be home" for an instant. But, it's just as well that I can't because you are where the Lord wants you to be. So, let me send, instead, our love and whole-hearted support as you serve our Heavenly Father far from home.

December 20th was a turning point for my family. Shannon, my angel wife, went into labor (during Relief Society of all times) and gave birth to a lovely, seven pound girl that evening. Our initial joy soon squeezed over to make room for a large chunk of deep concern when her doctors (several had been called in) began making arrangements to transfer our new little Rachel to Primary Children's hospital. It was confirmed that Rachel has a congenital heart defect. An operation was performed immediately that temporarily corrected the difficulty until she is stronger and can tolerate more extensive open-heart surgery. However, joy of joys, she recovered from her initial operation so quickly that we were able to take her home Christmas Eve! (That was almost as good a Christmas gift as the baptism of a beloved convert!)

New that you've met the youngest member of my family, may I introduce the rest? Talmage (Taj for short) is all of three. He loves to play in water and right now he's helping mother bathe Rachel by spraying water all over the kitchen windows. (He's a real sweetheart.) Emily is my five year old. She is bright, cute, sensitive and has this annoying little finger that she keeps her father wrapped around. Ben (11) is hooked on this new electronic game called K.C. Munchin---little dots running around eating up other little dots while trying to avoid being eaten up by some other dots (Oh, unless they turn purple)---Hmmm, doesn't make any sense to me either. Matt is my oldest (12). He is sort of surviving Farrer Jr. High. They spent most of Christmas vacation building a snow cave in our backyard and then spending the night in it (that may give you some clue regarding their tolerance for pain and their I.Q.'s). Shannon, my dear wife, still works with Webelos, actually she is taking this month off, and I'm still pestering Bishop Hansen from the vantage point of his second counselor.



Page -2-

I've been reading one of my Christmas gifts--a small paperback by Gladys Farmer called "Elders and Sisters". It's chock-full of stories, too real to be pure fiction, about the miseries and joys between missionary companions. It's full of stuff like---how to cope with a lazy companion---how to survive when your companion is better looking than you---how to have the "best two years of your life" when every door you tract is slammed in your face for months-on-end---and what to do when you get the so-down-you'd-rather-read-Mad-Magazine-than-the-Book-of-Mormon Blues. Infact, I'll give my copy to Sister Finlayson and ask her to rotate it among you.

Let me close by sharing my new-found perceptions of the gospel. Little Rachel's birth into our family has helped me see more clearly how fragile a thing life is. In fact, it is the gospel of Jesus Christ that brings our existence its worth, its strength, its ver meaning. I'm so grateful to the Lord for letting us have Rachel for however long He deems fit because she's, along with Reese Hansen, teaching me to have a greater dependence on the Lord and His love---much like when I was in the mission field. I more keenly perceive the gospel in action as I see the love of our Ward members flowing directly into my family bringing its quiet power that sustains, motavates, protects and heals. How I pray for your success as you work, and seek and teach. Share your testimonies freely and frequently for it is our testimonies that help us convert the word into action and ourselves into more accurate likeness of Him whom you serve. Our prayers for your strength, your spirit, your success and your humility are with you always.

Your friend,

Ray Harrison