

*Dad, would you pass this on? I can't find my address list
(How about a copy?)*

80 Greenridge Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605

August 3, 1987 (914) 949-0606

Dear Family,

We are thrilled about the new "little" (9 lb.) Wood addition. The last we heard his name might be Christian Fletcher. If I am correct, Mom and Dad now have 33 grandchildren, with one extra male! Our prayers are certainly with all of you and you know I am "on call" after Mom leaves if you need me.

I haven't written much, but hope to turn over a new leaf. I first want to thank each of you for your love and prayers through these past few years and for the caring you showed while I was in Utah recently. We have been very blessed in our family, and I think it is easy to take that for granted--particularly until we experience some other extremes. I came back from Provo with renewed appreciation and gratitude for the wonderful home Mom and Dad provided. Of course we all have our faults and problems. But we had a home with love, security, example, a sense of family pride, and the example of competent, independent, and faithful parents who above all respected and loved each other. These gifts are immeasurable and I thank the Lord every day for this upbringing.

I also feel especially grateful for you brothers and sisters. On the plane coming home, I thought about each one of you and your mates and the gifts you have and share. It was almost overwhelming to me to think all these positive qualities are available in the context of one family. And all your children are so beautiful and are such individuals! I gain so much inspiration and comfort from the lives you lead and the support you extend me. We must communicate more often and allow ourselves to unburden old stereotypes and get reacquainted and acknowledge changes which have come through growth. I felt really stupid in Utah when I saw these gorgeous nephews and nieces and had to admit I was still thinking of them mentally as they were when I last saw them. Spiritually, we as brothers and sisters have made similar changes, though less visible. I support Aspen Camp momentum for next year.

I want to share a blessing that came by surprise last week. I took Daniel and Laura by train and cab to Madison Square Garden to hear Paul Dunne and the Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus (splendid evening)! We were there an hour early and suddenly this adorable nine-year-old came running with outstretched arms to greet us. Remember "Andy," the foster child we thought was a permanent placement, but lost? He came at age 3½ and was with us about six months. It was one of the most wrenching experiences of my life to give him up. We risked not only losing him, but losing him to the gospel because Church Social Services refused to place him again because his Jewish aunt gave them and me such a bad time and had misrepresented his adoptability (it turned out he had a father with rights--we had thought him illegitimate--his drug-addict mother still had hopes of rehabilitation and wouldn't sign--and this aunt, who had custody rights, made our life miserable and made it very difficult to help Andy.

When it became clear we could not keep him, I remember fasting over several days to get an assurance that Andy would get a gospel home. This assurance finally came with absolute surety which gave me the courage to go ahead with the procedure. I remember when the time came to tell Andy Church Social Services was coming to get him and would return him to his aunt. He knew as well as we that she did not want to keep him, but was envious of any home he entered. "But, Mom," he cried, "Who will take care of me this time?" While I struggled for words, he smiled through his tears to answer his own question: "Jesus will take care of me, won't he?" It was one of those moments word cannot describe. We felt the Savior put his arms around us and we knew He would.