

Some thoughts Mom asked me to collate from some of Elder Daniel ~~W.~~ Bartholomew's recent letters: (I'm typing this on Mom's computer--we're in Provo for Dad B's funeral, --he d. suddenly of a massive heart attack on 13 Feb 1991 in Germany).

Nov. 29, 1990 "I send my love and prayers to you from Guatemala. I have really been enjoying your letters. Please take care of yourselves. I have been studying in 2 Nephi 27, 3 Nephi 26, and Ether 3 & 4 this morning. These chapters speak of revelations which we cannot yet access. It speaks of the sealed portions of the Book of Mormon and a revelation which exists in which the history of the world from beginning to end is given.

The Lord makes it very clear that we can receive these revelations if we repent and become clean before the Lord and exercise faith in Him as Jared did. He says that if we do these things, "I will manifest unto them the things which the Brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations...of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are." (Ether 3:7) That is a great promise.

We have trials here. It is very hard to see people who have been baptized break their covenants. Sometimes I wonder if we're doing much good. Whose fault is it when there aren't lots of baptisms? We're promised in Alma 26:22 that if we repent, exercise faith, bring forth good works, and pray continually without ceasing that we'll be conceded thousands of baptisms. I have yet to pray for an entire hour without ceasing, and truthfully, I still have much to learn.

It's as if someone told me there was a ton of gold under my bed, and I knew it was true, but didn't get rich because I didn't take the time to find out how to sell it. Except it's much bigger than that. For crying out loud--they tell us so clearly--you can be gods some day! Here's what you can do to achieve it. And I say... 'Oh, I really don't feel like it. Maybe tomorrow.' Our investigators do the same thing. Sometimes I feel like opening up their heads to see what's really inside.

Thank you for being the two best parents of all time. I love you! I'm finally learning--after all the gray hairs I gave you two. I think you wear real halos. You two deserve a pat on the back and a gold medal. I love you guys more than anything." (I had to include that because once he's home and he gets back to reality, we might never see it again. Pres. Wood says such sentiments end the first time you ask them to mow the lawn.)

From another letter mailed on same date: "Yesterday Elder Sandoval and I went to visit a family we baptized that hasn't gone to church since. The father was very drunk and wanted to fight, and the rest of the neighborhood was cold, as well. I offered to shake hands with one kid, and he refused, saying, 'I'm Catholic.' I've also been trying too hard to perfect myself, and the load got too heavy, bringing me to tears one morning. But that's good, believe it or not, because I'm learning what my weaknesses are. I am gradually learning to plan around them--setting high goals, but trying to relax, crack a smile, and accept myself when I make my mistakes.

"I am seeing some improvement. I used to get angry quickly and just blow up and then walk off, having vented away all that pressure. It takes a long time for someone to anger me now. I'm looking for the way to be the very strictly obedient missionary who is also happy, smiling, and enthusiastic. I want to be spiritual, without being pretentious. I want to be just and merciful. It isn't easy, but I'm making progress."

From 20 Dec 1990: "They say that in two years a person can change a lot. Some missionaries have even been heard to say that when they came home, they couldn't even recognize their parents. I don't believe it. I think you'll be the same. PLEASE take care of yourselves. I've heard that parents can just go to RUIN after their children leave home, but I have faith that won't happen to my Mom* (big smiley face). Do be careful. All that Ben and Jerry's with cantaloupe and all that other great stuff.

* See upcoming photo (*6*/6!)



(I find it VERY hard to believe that a missionary who is just and merciful, devoted and obedient, could send such OBSCENE predictions through the mail! I retaliated by describing in exquisite detail some recent salivary experiences with ice-cream sundaes and sirloin lasagne.)

No date on this letter, again, but it arrived the day we went to the airport for Dad B.'s funeral, so it was great to bring this news along:

"Dear Mom and Dad, Sad tidings, folks. After only 6 months in the same area, a NEW ASSIGNMENT (HUGE SMILEY FACE!). Yippee! Hooray! I am back in the Capitol (Guatemala City) in a place called Zona 6. I'm in Barrio (Ward) Sion (Zion) and there is a bishop here and lots of enthusiastic members. Thank you, thank you, thank you. (Do you get the impression he did NOT like being branch president?) "My new companion is Elder (edited). He is not a flecha (straight arrow), but that's OK because I am. And guess what! My zone leader is Elder Henderson--one of the gringos in my old MTC district. I love him so much. He is such a great guy, and he lives five houses away. ROOT BEER FLOATS ON THE HOUSE FOR EVERYBODY! I'M BUYING!

"Seriously, now. It's a relief to have all that responsibility in Esquipulas taken off of my back, but now that I can put all of my concentration in missionary work, I have to form a plan and really work hard. Pray for me. There's still lots to do and only a year more to learn in the mission. But excuuuuuse me, if I give way to another (25 spaces high: HIP HIP HOORAY! WHOOPEE! HA HA! (Smiley face.)

"I hear all the missionaries in the U.S. have gotten draft letters or something like that. I don't know what to think of all that's going on, but I put my trust in the Lord that he'll take good care of us. 'Sorry this is so short, but I've gotta run. Love ya. Elder Bartholomew" (I told him I got the same draft letter for him, but I told them he was lost in Zimbabwe.) (That was a joke.)

Love to each of you!
Theresa (on behalf of Elder B.)