

Sunday Feb. 12 78
Tracy Jr.

Dear Family,

It was good to read all of your letters. Having had it since Wednesday, I guess I'd better get it on the road again.

We've been concerned about you, Sherlene, Dan, Virginia, and Barry, since the news reports of this latest terrible blizzard to strike the east, but since we've not heard of any personal disasters to befall you, we'll hope that all is well and that you're enjoying a pleasant warm spring when this letter reaches you. Hope your leg is all better, Virginia. Ouch!

Happy birthdays, Mom, Virginia, and David.

In the month of January, we received almost a whole years' allotment of rain, and the drought is over! The weather forecasters predicted that February, however, would be a dry month, a sort of "son of drought", but so far it's rained nearly every day, with ferocious winds that have downed a lot of trees. So they've converted the drought information center into a flood warning center. Sure wish the weather would stop acting like a woman!

Every Saturday I've been out working on the landscaping at our new chapel which is nearing completion two blocks from here. We've been fortunate to have mostly dry Saturdays, but that California adobe we're working in sure makes the going rough. I had hoped to get my garden started early this year, because peas, beets, the cabbage family, and other cool weather crops do quite well here in winter, but I just can't seem to get started. In fact, I've still got the raspberries I brought back from Tacoma at thanks~~giving~~ in a bucket out in back. They've sprouted leaves and seem to be surviving so far.

Seminary has surely been a rewarding assignment for me. I really feel blessed by that daily spiritual boost, and I'm beginning to learn how to like teenagers. Betsy has the seniors in her Sunday school class and she's established an excellent rapport with them; we got a report from one of the boys who told a friend that it was sure nice to have an older sister. I'm really blessed to have a wife with such a capacity to love--I'm really counting on her to pull our teenagers through, when we have six of them at once, but I don't know how long this second teen-age hood of hers can last. Last week she got a baby sitter and stood out in the rain to watch one of her kids in a soccer game--tonight she's taking a casserole to them because he and his mother are sick. Anyway, it sure shows what really matters in a teaching assignment--not the time you spend in preparation or the skill with which you teach, but the real love and concern you have for your students. It is taking me longer at five days a week to feel comfortable with the same group Betsy teaches only once a week.

I gave a talk in Sacramento meeting last week on the assigned topic of building family relationships, and decided to interview my kids for help with their point of view. I recorded their remarks in their journals as we spoke, which slowed us down a bit, but still got their thoughts and feelings recorded, something which I'm sure will be priceless to them. I shared them with the kids permission in my talk, and thought you might enjoy some excerpts, too.

Robert, age three. (We go in the quiet room and shut the door to be alone). "Hi Robert, come and sit by me." "No. ... Yes. (now he's sitting by me) What do you like to do? (He sees me writing)" Now say, From . . . where is

my Mom? "What do you like to do?" "Play friends." Who are your friends?
 "But they are at school." "Do you love your brother and sisters?" (Nods)
 "Do you love your Mommy and your Daddy?" "Yes." "Why do you love Mommy?"
 "'Cause I'm so happy of them." "Why do you love your Daddy?" (blowing into
 plastic baseball bat.,) "Look at my mouth, Dad! I'm a funnering monster.
 Say funny monster." "What would you like Daddy to do to make you happiest?"
 "But get down the Cutie (Cootie) game, I want to play with it." . . .

Mary(5) "Hi, Mary, I love you. "I love you too." How do you feel about
 our family? "Tracy needs a nap" Hmmm. "Yes, he hasn't had many naps, and he ..
 like hurts me and does those things. .". . How do you feel about the rest
 of your bothers and sisters? "Zina's nice a lot." Robert? "Well, today
 he ripped his valentine bag. Do you play a lot with Robert? (Nods) Do
 you play a lot with Tracy? "Not that much--one day he took me to the park".
 Can you think of anything kind that Tracy has done for you? "I don't know,
 but sort of kind." Like what? "Like lets me in his bedroom." What else?
 "Well, (digging around in my Tasche), somethimes he does jokes, and waits his
 turn. " "Do you love Tracy? "Yes". Do you think he loves you? "I
 don't know I don't think he does in a way he likes me, and in a way he
 doesn't. " Do you want to be with Tracy forever? (Nods), "And there's one
 thing I think you want to know--I never want to be kidnapped." What does
 Daddy do that you like? "Plays with me a lot--and gives me horsey back
 rides." Anything else? "No, I want to stop now." Is there anything he
 doesn't do that you want him to do? "Stay home form work." Why? "Then
 I could play with him more."

Zina (6) Zina, do you like our family? "No (Giggle), I actually do, write
 yes." What do you like best about our family? "Let me see, I like Tracy,"
 (Hmmm), Why do you like Tracy so much? "Cause he's so funny. Let Me see--
 I like him because he's so sarcastic" Really? "Uh huh, and because I love him."
 Do you think that we are a forever family? "Yes" What do you think Daddy can do
 and should do to keep our family together. "Well, he should try and make
 us be quiet in Sunday School." Do you think then that a father should
 teach his children what's right? "Uh huh". What should a father do when
 his children do something bad. "He sould say 'don't do that'." If Daddy
 just said don'tx do that do you think the children would obey? "Sometimes".
 Do you think that your father and mother love you enough? "Yes" How does
 Daddy show his love for you? "By taking care of me and by working for money
 for us for the family and by buying beds for us and like that." If all
 Daddy did was earn money for our family would that be enought? "Uh, No"
 What else should he doe? "Well, I don't know exactly. " (She's writing
 down her own responses now on a piece of paper). What could Daddy do to be
 a better Daddy? "Well, I don't think he needs to do anything more." Well,
 Zina, that makes me feel good. "What did Tracy Say? " (I read some of
 Tracy's responses to this question. "Well, he does need to play with
 the kids a little more." What kind of play do you like best with Daddy?
 "Taking horsey back rides and like that."

Tracy (7) What do you like best about our family?" Well, Mommy always
 fixes dinner at the right time, I think . . and you're trying to remember
 to finish my Y-guides project--and also you've missed out on Zina's-you
 know-time, and so you're trying to make up for it." Do you think it's
 important for a Dad to spend time with his children. "yes, that's one of
 the best things in our family . You spend lots of time with us, and you
 usually don't argge with the one who is activity [in charge of activity]
 in family home evening. And you let us spend our money anyway we want to."
 Do you think that Daddy has done enought to teach you the gospel?"Yes, even
 though most of it I have taught myself" How is that [I interrupted to
 catch up with writing and he lost train of thought]. Are you looking forward
 to your baptism? "Yes, and now I remember . . . I was going to say like

when how you always usually punish us in some way but I just go to my room and try to get ready to pray." Do you feel that Heavenly Father answers your prayers? "Yes, very often, in fact I can't remember a time when he hasn't--and you know my memory is very good, like I remember when you first learned how to pan for gold (he couldn't have been more than 4), and that time when I almost drowned (he was 3 yrs 2 months), there was something like a colck in the water and one hand was on the eleven (I think) and the other (I think) was on the four or five. " Do you ~~think~~ feel like our family will be together forever? "Yes, or I hope so, at least. " Is there anyone in our family that you sometimes can't stand to be with? "Yes, sometimes Mary makes me mad, but only sometimes." What does she do that makes you mad? "Well, there was something very valuable that I had, and she wrecked it// and there were some other times, also." If you can't stand to be with her sometimes, do you think you would want to be with her forever? "Well, yes, because those times are just some times. And also, one of the reasons I'M anxious to be baptized is so I can have a Book of Mormon of my own. " You love to read the Book of Mormon, don't you? "Ya, I do, especially if it were my own." Well, Tracy, one more question. What do you think I could do better, to be a better father? "Hmm- not much, but you could not punish us as often, and that would be something good." By punish, do you mean like spank, or just correct? "Spank, or like send me to my room, or threaten me, or to yell at me. But still, there are some good things that you do, like I already told you about spending time with us." Well, Tracy, I love you, and I'm glad you feel ~~that~~ you can tell me how you feel about me. "And also, one more thing, ^{that} Dad--I think a mouth wash would help you." (End of interview. No comment.)

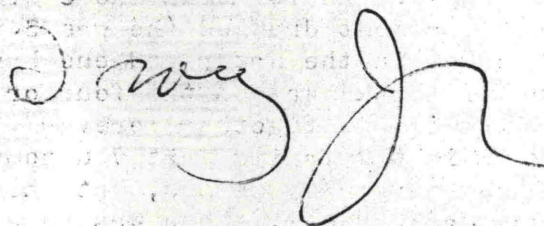
this was finished Feb 20. Happy Birthday Mom, we'll deliver it to Liz and Marty tonight. Mom said yesterday what she wants for birthdays, mothers day, etc, from us is written remembrances of good times we've had. It will be fun to try and stir up my brain. Also, my kids love to hear about when I was a kid.

David, I heard that you are now serving as Mega president, or whatever they call it these days. I wish you well--I'm sure you'll do well--you seem to have a good feel for business. I sure hope that you can somehow reconcile the various people who may feel bad about how things went. And be sure you read D&C sec 121 at least once a week!

Well, love to you all. Sorry I sat on the letter so long this time. Life is just whirring by at such a pace! I'm beginning to feel very strongly that my time to strike out for greater independence and my pot of gold is drawing near. Maybe after the great pending breakthrough in my present research project? It seems like things have been breaking through for two years now, but we're really under pressure at the moment to come up with something for the annual review with our new company ~~present~~, ^{present} John Young, in March, and I think we just might pull it off. I've been putting in lots of extra time (some of it on some ideas of my own that I don't care to politic for approval on--you guys don't mention this to anyone), and I'm doing it because I'm interested in the work. But of course, the managers think I'm doing it because they're turning the screws. Last week even Jerry (my immediate supervisor, with whom I've always had a very good relationship) started knuckling under the pressure

and riding me a bit, but I'm sure he'll back off when he can--he knows how detrimental a high pressure environment is to creativity, and he usually is a pretty good buffer between me and the powers that be.

So long for now

A large, stylized handwritten signature, possibly reading "D. J. Jones" or similar, written in dark ink.