

May 6, 1978

Dear Children:

The only trouble with using this type-set is that the l is not a 1 and so if I have to use the 1 verymuch in this letter, just transcribe mentally.

I really shouldn't be sitting down to write this letter now. my house is a MESS. Our TV has been having a no-picture phase in its present situation downstairs. We thought it had finally given out and were talking about ditching it and just going without a TV or buying a new one.

However, Tracy took it upstairs to our bedroom and it worked just great which indicated that there was something wrong with the wire leading to the outlet from our antennae. Tracy suggested that, if I were to reverse the furniture in the bedroom we could just set it up there, and I went along because I had been thinking of doing just that to distribute the wear on the carpet a little differently. (You know, our grandmothers were not dummies. A room size rug rather than wall-to-wall carpeting has a lot going for it. It can be turned to distribute the wear, etc.) So this morning we started moving the bed to the East wall and the bureau to the west wall of the bedroom. But of course, before we could put the bureau in place we had to cut the Ivy off the window on the west (which Tracy was going to have to do anyway to accomplish his task of splicing the wire to the TV). This led to cleaning off the windowsill, which led to cleaning the window, and while I had that window to clean, I might just as well clean the other window, and in the process of cleaning that window, of course I noticed how dirty the draperies and the curtains were--and you guessed it--the furniture turning turned into a full scale house cleaning.

Now that the girls have gone back to D.C., the rooms are vacant and so all week I have been cleaning downstairs. I wanted to get ready for camp, and felt the place needed a good general clean up and de-spidering, which is often needed in downstairs places, and besides I thought maybe I might have to put some of you on the floor when you come, and that ppts you closer to the spiders. Anyway, when you come if any of the children edn up in sleeping bags on the floor rest at ease that they are in as spiderless an atmosphere as can reasonably be expected. (Are you all feeling itchy?)

By the way, I will have three empty bedrooms but the way the beds are now, I have the trundle bed in the boys room and also in the boys room are the bunk beds which means that I can sleep four in the boys bedrooms. The queen bed is in the small bedroom with the crib. Accomodate a couple and a babe. Then there is the empty (except for all of Charlotte's stuff, which she is slowly moving so that it will be all ready for the movers when they graduate. But I figure I can take the mattresses off the bunk beds and make a floor-bed for a couple in the big bedroom. Then a couple can sleep in the boys bedroom on the trundle, and a couple of kids can go into sleeping bags on the empty bunks (hard). I am thinking of getting two of those mattress-type pads that can go on the bunks.

Dad just said that the splicing worked and the TV is now in functioning condition again--I should have waited to move the furniture, Oh well.....

All of you who have sleeping bags bring them for your kids. I don't know how many of you will be needing accomodations and for how long after the summer camp (and before). It would be nice if you could let me know so that I can make arrangements.

Tracy, I don't know when you and Betsy are planning to make your move

or to where--but I guess much will depend upon your choice as to where to move. We have told them that if they come here they can do as David did and stay in the basement until they can get located in a home of their own. If they should decide that they are coming here and they are in the basement by June, that would not make any difference, because we can move the children around (children don't have any rights, I guess) so that we would still have the same amount of room (Because Tracy and Betsy would be one of the couples involved in needing space, anyway). We figure maybe we will put up a tent on the back lawn and let the children sleep out there shepherded by one of the fathers (or grandfathers if you can twist his arm). That would be fun for them. We would just let them sleep in sleeping bags in the tent.

Be sure and let me know who I need to bring bedding for to the camp. I will let you all arrange for your own extra milk this year, as it didn't work out so well last year. If you all have your own supply then you can decide how much each of you can drink. Nursing mothers and pregnant mothers will need milk too. It would be so much simpler if they just served milk for all the meals.

If you want to have the camp supply bedding be sure and let them know in advance--also it will facilitate things if you all let them know how many cribs you will need so they can be set up in advance, especially if you might be getting in late in the evening.

What I started to tell you about two paragraphs back is to let me know how many of you will need accommodations before==oh, oh, I just saw that I did say that. Didn't read far enough back. Sorry about that.

We decided not to go on our trip during May (darn) because Tracy has a new counselor and we also decided that we have so much to do out on the farm that we had better put some of our effort and time out there.

Dad is officially "leaved" from the Y. They talked him into taking year-by-year leave until he is retirement age rather than retiring now, so his retirement wouldn't be substantially reduced. We will pay our benefits in so that they will still be in force.

He (Dad) has bought a tractor and we will gradually put the farm in christmas trees and nursery stock. I might turn my hand at growing (field-grown - some perennials, too. If Nancy wants to (and if we ever get a building built) she can operate a greenery out on the farm as she will be living only a block or two from the farm). We are still not fully "jelled" on plans, but I guess we will work things out as we go along. I had visions (and dad still does) about putting up a greenhouse on the farm, but I won't do this as it involves too much expense and I would almost have to move out to the farm, and at this stage of the game, I have no intention of doing that.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TRACY HUNTINGTON ON HIS BAPTISM AND HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CHURCH. He is a good boy and we are very proud of him. I feel he will be a great servant in his Father's Kingdom some day. His parents are teaching him the gospel so that he will be ready for this service.

Sherlene, will you in your next letter, give the full name and etc. for those records. Doug and Nancy and some of the other children might want to know just what you are talking about so they can consider getting it for their children. I have been considering getting those records and books for the grandchildren, but they would be much more effective in the homes themselves. Children are so brainwashed by the material they get on TV etc., we might just as well do a little brain-washing of our own. "As a twig is bent, so grows the tree--" and "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." (or something.)

I cannot tell you how proud I am of all of you. You are doing so much with your lives. I am popping buttons all over the place with pride at your involvement in these important issues of the day. (Gives me an excuse NOT to get involved--after all my children are) Not really, But I am so proud of all of you.

Nancy, be sure you tell them about Doug's baseball. David and Karen loaned me their three boys for a week-end a couple of weeks ago, and we had fun. They have done a good job on those boys. I can't believe that Michael. He didn't get into one thing he shouldn't have all the time he was here. When Carli is here, we literally follow her around from place to place, and she is into everything. Maybe Michael hasn't entered that stage and maybe he is over that stage, but I couldn't believe him. I had child-proofed to a certain extent, but it was all completely unnecessary as far as Michael was concerned. I guess children are different, that's all. David and Karen had warned me that sometimes he gets very stubborn. And not to push Stephen at the table or he gets terrifically upset--but we did not have any problems--Stephen and Mark are good eaters--not like my own seven were--and seemed to enjoy everything. ---especially the prepared cereals--Mark saw them in the cupboard one morning, and said: "You shouldn't have those cereals in your cupboards"---
 "Would you like some?" I asked? After eggs and fruit and milk, they both ate two or three bowls of cereal before I turned them off. Thereafter, they would rather have a bowl of prepared cereal (usually cherioats) for desert than anything else. That says something for the very good sense of their parents in serving those children cooked cereals instead of prepared cereals--better for them, and a darn sight cheaper, too. Tracy and I usually have them on hand so that Tracy can grab something if he gets up early and wants to get his own breakfast and leave--but we usually have cracked wheat or cooked whole wheat ourselves. (Keeps us regular--a common old age problem).

Thanks for that little note, Barry, or I should say the paper. Virginia is still the same--a very, very GIVING person. She was that way around the house, too, Barry. Giving is a gift from God, I think, and I am thankful that the Lord was more generous to my children than he was to me. Giving is an effort to me, I have to make myself do the things I know I should do--and for most of you it just comes naturally. Even David, who is more like his mother than many of you is very generous of his time in helping his father and Mother in little ways which take his time. I don't know how he is with neighbors and friends, but Karen will certainly make up for any lack there in the position which she has. Doug and Nancy are helpful, too, and I will admit I look forward to my older years much more with confidence knowing that David and Nancy and their families will be close. (Now don't you MOVE.)

It will be hard to see Charlotte and Bryan go to California. But we are grateful that they got married in December and that we have had these brief months to get acquainted with Bryan. They come in to see us often and we really enjoy them. I hope they are feeling as relaxed and happy around us as we feel around them. Bryan and Charlotte are very happy and we are pleased to see our daughter married to such a splendid young man. When Doug and Nancy decide to go through the temple we will all be sealed together and that's what it's all about isn't it? Loving each other so much that we want to be together for Eternity. And when this extends to loving your neighbor, who, is after all, really just your spiritual brother and sister, so much that you want them to be with you always, too, then I guess you really have it made. I guess in my old age I am mellowing some (although you may not have noticed) because
 (Over)

I have found that there are very few people that I would really not be willing to be around all the time. However, I am still working on it. Really, though, if you try there really is something you can find that is good about everyone if you look hard enough. (I'm looking, I'm Looking.) Doug and Nancy are in a ward where there are very few young people, and so they find it difficult to find interest in going to church. I hope this will change when they get into their new home (which isn't started yet) (But which will soon be) Nancy was raised in about an ideal a ward as you can find (Prejudiced!) and so she is finding it a little different being in other wards, but that is what the Gospel is all about--for the perfecting of the saints-- and that is where most of the satisfaction comes from church work--helping others to grow, and one of the miracles of the church is how much people do grow as they accept assignments that they just never thought they could do.

In this same line, we were at the setting apart of Brother Conn, who is the new counselor to your Father. A Humble man, but Pres. Peterson promised him in his setting apart prayer, that "THE MANTLE OF HIS AUTHORITY would fall about his shoulders and he would do and say things that he would know would not be from his own ability, but from our father in Heaven. He blessed him, too, with the ability to LOVE those with whom he would work and that he would find his calling one of great happiness." It was truly a great blessing. Elwood has really mellowed with the years, too (Did you know that his palsied son, Brett, died last month?) Sabra talked at his funeral and told of the many blessings this handicapped child had brought into their home, and that is certainly true. Most children are not by nature truly compassionate, but you cannot believe the compassion which was generated in those brothers and sisters by that handicapped child. His blessing was truly a beautiful one which he gave brother Conn. I guess marriage, having children, working in the church, growing in our knowledge of our Heavenly Father's plan for his children here on this earth, was meant to MELLOW us. That is probably what the Lord meant for most of us when he talks about "refining us with refining fire." If we keep close to the church and accept the callings as they come to us, and try to do our best in our families and in our homes, by the time we come to the end of our lives, we really should be ready to meet our Heavenly Father when we go to the other side, and have him say to us : "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

I haven't often said it to you children, "THAT I KNOW THE GOSPEL IS TRUE, and that I love the Lord with all my heart." And I should have said it much much oftener. I hope that you have known it through my actions-- which should speak louder than words, but nevertheless, we need to tell each other--and the Lord--much oftener. I feel your testimonies--and your lives are living examples of them, and I am so proud of you as you raise your children in righteousness--what a righteous posterity you are bringing us and those who have gone before, and who are equally proud of what you are doing as parents and as church members. (Boy, I really AM growing old. Isn't that a sign of old age---introspection?)

So many families are split apart by dissention and bickering--and I guess we have our moments, too, but for the most part I think we are a loving family. I can truly say with no exceptions what-so-ever, that I love all of you and I love all those you have married. They are as my own to me now, and I know your father feels the same way. I can't express the great joy you all bring to me--and what good and blessed grandchildren you have blessed us with--each different and delightful in ~~their~~ ^{his} own way.

Enough's enough...but my heart is so full of love for all of you that it is simply spilling over (Indeed, my cup runneth over)

Love,

Muzzer