

Sun November 6, 1983

T. Jr.

Dear Family,

This letter is going to have to be a quickie, like our family prayer after fast meeting today, as we've come in to Mega to use the computer and the kids will need dinner soon. I had the idea of asking the family what they wanted me to pray for, and there were several suggestions, including to bless the kids who were confirmed today (6!), that it wouldn't rain so Jason (Betsy's youngest brother who just returned from a mission to Quebec and who is staying with us while he tries to get admitted to BYU) could finish a house painting job he's on, and several other requests, until finally Robert, who was dying of hunger (he survived) said "and bless that the prayer won't be too long so we can eat!". So I just asked the Lord to "bless all the things we've been talking about" and pleased everyone.

We had a wonderful ten-day vacation to Tacoma. Geoffrey (another of Betsy's brothers) drove with us, so we traded off and drove straight through. We came down through the Columbia gorge toward Portland in the early morning hours, and it surely was an incredibly beautiful sight. I still can't get over all the green of Oregon and Washington, plus the beauty of the interspersed deciduous fall color. Saturday was the service at the synagogue commemorating the Bat Mitzvah (daughter of the covenant) of Michelle Maslan, daughter of our friends Robert and Carol Maslan, who became "Bat Mitzvah" when she turned 12 (for boys it's 13) and we took Grandpa & Grandma Huntington and all the kids but the two babes. The girls had on their Zimbabwe crocheted dresses for the first time and were beautiful, and the kids were very well behaved through the 3-hour service, partly, I am sure, because it was such an interesting experience for them. We were sitting down near the front, and afterwards Carol told us that several Jewish mothers told her "I kept telling my kids: why can't you behave like them!" which made us quite proud. Of course, there was a fantastic feast afterwards, with the usual bagels & lox (smoked salmon), etc., but I was most impressed by the service. This 12 year-old gal read from the Torah (in Hebrew, without points), (the passage for the day was the section on Abraham's covenant of circumcision) and from the Haftorah (prophets: the section for the day was Isaiah 40: the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: prepare ye the way of the Lord. . . He shall feed his flock like a shepherd . . . but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. . . all good Mormon scriptures), all again in Hebrew, and led several songs and recitations in Hebrew, as well as giving a talk (in English) about the Haftorah and thanking and honoring her parents and relatives. Her mother gave a lovely prayer in her behalf (the only prayer in the service that wasn't prescribed or in Hebrew, and for me the high point of the service), and her Father led the rest of the service. The only part I objected to was that the Rabbi gave her the priestly blessing instead of her father, and he held out his arms toward her instead of putting his hands on her head. (The words are in Numbers 6:22-27: " . . . The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." But Bob reminded me that every sabbath evening he gets to bless his daughters that they will be like the mothers of Israel, Sariah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah, so he didn't feel

bad. (I told him that in blessing his daughters to be like them, he was asking for some pretty feisty ladies!).

At any rate, I received a strong testimony from this experience that the Lord loves all of his children, that he hears all of their prayers, and that he is pleased with all who try to serve him and keep his commandments. I still am dying to share the gospel with our friends, but I now feel satisfied to "wait upon the Lord" until his own due time. I just hope it's not like what Heber J. Grant is reported to have said about the Japanese after returning from that country: "the only way to convert them is to hit them over the head and do baptism for the dead."

Marie, the kid's new step-grandmother, is a really sweet and generous person, quite a dynamo of energy, and it was good for the kids to get to know her. Her mother, "Grandma Bailey," a died-in-the-wool southern Baptist, also lives with them, so Grandpa Huntington got quite a "package deal" when he married Marie. Grandma Bailey must have made a dozen scrumptious pies for us while we were there. We went out on the Puget Sound in Grandpa's new 14-foot runabout, went for a lovely drive through the forest almost-primeval at Point Defiance and explored the old fort there, visited the marvelous aquarium, blew on the Shofars at the home of Bob's mother (Betsy & Carol play much better than Bob or I) and handled an ancient Torah hit several of the great thrift stores (for \$4.95 at St. Vincent de Paul's I found a little leather-bound Bible printed in 1847 for Bob's birthday (his father had a fantastic collection of old Torahs, Talmuds's, Bibles of all kinds, etc., and he continues to collect)), ate lots of wonderful seafood, and just had a good old time. Next summer we're hoping to visit California. Too many friends too long no see. Plus we can mooch off Liz & Marty. We'll bring our own sleeping bags.

I'm really looking forward to Thanksgiving at Mom's this year. Betsy's three Bachelor brothers are all in town, and we were going to have Thanksgiving at home with them, but Mom insisted on inviting them, too. She's a wonderful gal. Dad travelled this week to Texas (little t for humility's sake) with David and Duane Horton on a sales trip and is coming into Mega in the morning now. It's good to have his ideas and his amazing, wonderful notebooks around. This week he found a 1970 experiment he did on leaching nickel-bonded diamond and using it as a tool which completely frees us of interference with a GE patent we had been worried about infringing. When he gets his computer, I'm going to encourage him to index those notebooks, they're such a valuable resource.

Marty, I almost cried when I read about your injuries. Hope you recover completely, and soon. But why don't you take up a safer sport, such as skydiving! Sherlene, we're really excited about the genealogy finds you're making. Keep it up.

Love,

Tracy Jr