

January 27, 1990

Dear Family:

Enclosed is a letter from Tracy who is now in Haiti. It was six pages in his hand writing, so to consolidate for mailing purposes, I have typed it. Hope my transcription is not too far off, Tracy.

Betsy said that after Tracy stayed in the mission home in Haiti, he thought "this won't be so bad, after all". Then came the revolution. He is living in a house that (as I understand it) has been used by missionaries for some time. (The returned missionaries remember that same house) I wish Betsy were writing this or that I could remember just what she said and in the way she said it. The bottom line is that they have only cold water and it's very HOT down there--but Tracy assures his folks that he is getting used to the heat and after all, what can feel better after a hot, hot day, than a cold shower?

Tracy, you can now identify with your Grandfather. When he was a boy the family only had cold water in their house. Every Saturday Mother Hall would heat water on the stove and all five boys would take a bath in the same round tin tub. (How did they decide who got first shot at the tub?) None of these daily "run the water until it gets cold" showers then. In the summer they would put the tin tub out in the summer sun and the sun would heat the water. There's an idea for you, Tracy. Heat the water in the sun. My father was a plumber so as long as I can remember, we had indoor bathrooms and hot water. After all, what kind of plumber doesn't do a plum job on his own house?

In Zimbabwe, the ward members who were the most well off had running cold water in their homes. The poorer ones cooked outside and had NO running water at all inside. Your Grandfather was on the verge of rigging up a solar system for heating water on the roof and then running it through a shower in the house below for our member saints, but we were transferred before he could get to it.

When we started our quilt project, one of the ward members said "We'll invite everyone to see them--but they'll have to join the church to get in on it." We assured him that that wasn't a very good reason to join the church. In South Africa some of the blacks joined the church if they thought they could get a ride from the homelands into Capetown once in a while. The mission President stopped that by eliminating the truck the Sr. Missionaries were driving around. They were even delivering groceries to members. (Like joining the church for the welfare system.)

We were told not to even give rides to members in Zimbabwe, but we kind of winked at that. In fact we once went 20 miles with 9 women in our little Toyota. We were taking them home from a home-making meeting at our house. (from Harare to Highfield). We were so crowded that one woman sat over the gear shift between the two front seats. (Talk about How many can you get in a Volkswagon). With us having a car, and no one else having a car--can you think of any better way to get your officers to church on time? Left to her own devices, the Jr Sunday School leader would get there when church was almost over.

And then there's the story of the faithful sister who lived in a neighboring township and saved her hard earned money to take the bus from her home to where we had church and back home again. When she didn't come we knew it was because she didn't have the money. It makes you awfully ashamed because you have so much, and some of our other brothers and sisters in this world have so little.

what about baby brothers and sisters? Will you Mothers examine those eyes and if you think there is any problem send them back to me and I will send them back and get other presents for the girls involved.

I was amazed at what Virginia and Barry have accomplished since we were at their home for the reunion. That girl is a throw back to her Grandmother Charlotte Langford--the work she puts out is incredible, besides which she serves as Primary President and has time to help others. They still have some finishing to do, but what they have finished is absolutely beautiful.

We're so proud of our kids and grandkids. (bad word, proud!) we think we'll keep you all. (My "page preview" says that I have half a page left. (So I changed the font))

Nancy has moved into her home. They finally finished painting the stair rails only to have the inspector tell her that the stairs had to be done entirely over because they weren't up to code. Poor Nancy and Doug. I wonder if they will ever want to build another house. The problem right now is to get the power turned on as they are on temporary power and can not use the washing machine or dryer or dishwasher or too many lights. To get permanent service, they have to put in the underground cables to the street. It's a beautiful house, however, and probably looks even better now that they have their furniture in it. Nancy plans to go to work for a reducing salon. Can't remember the name of the place. She will probably start training for that about the 1st of the year. The real estate agent held an open house this week end and says there is a couple who are quite interested. Wouldn't that be ironic, if after being on the market all this time, they moved in just to move out?

Uncle Wendell will be coming home about the 1st of February. The moral, I am sorry to say, to his story, is that if you have hang-ups about some phase of the Church, just keep it to yourself, or if you want to be retired to a shelf, tell it all to a general authority. Anybody want a church vacation? Don't you dare!

Love, Grandmother Hall

(gaw)