



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

Printable Copy of Letter

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To: joyce@larsen-family.us

Thu, Sep 16, 2010

at 12:31 PM

Dear Elder Larsen!

Since you're my son, I guess I can call you Phillip, but it's so wonderful you're a missionary! I saw the "interview" you did with Gwen, and also the pictures, and they're on your FB page already. Technology is amazing. It made me so excited for you, to see those! I can see the hand of the Lord already in our lives, because of your faithful dedication as a missionary. I feel His Spirit more, and I have a greater desire to know Him. I will work on improving my scripture and gospel study. Plus, I would like to learn some Portuguese, along with you!

Last night at Julia's school open house, I ran into Lucy Beato. I know I've told you about her, but you may not remember. She is from Brazil, and she used to own a little gift shop that I would walk by on my way to the yarn shop when it was in its old location. (Her husband also had cancer, and was treated by Dr. O'Shea. He is doing better now.) She is so friendly and loving. I wonder if that's a cultural thing, as well as being her personality. You'll have to let me know when you get to Brazil and meet the people. I've been to her house twice. Anyway, I told her about you, and she wants me to visit her. Her mother is also visiting from Brazil, from somewhere west of Sao Paulo, and will be here until November. Lucy said if I need help with Portuguese, to come to her, so I think I'll take her up on her offer. Maybe at some point I can invite missionaries to teach her, too.

At the open house, I talked to Mrs. Santerre, and also Mr. Courounis. Mrs. Santerre, especailly, was interested in your mission, and has a nephew who served a mission in Brazil. She said one time at Christmas, his phone call came to her house because all of the people were visiting at her house, so she is very familiar with how missions are done, with the letters and phone calls.

I'm still working on tracking down a zip code for Morgan, and an address for Ryan Rainey. Taylor Bentall's address (according to the back of Sunday's program) is:

Elder Taylor Bentall

Brazil Sao Paulo East Mission

Rua Caa-Acu, 229

Belenzinho

Sao Paulo-SP 03171-020

Which others would you like? I can gather addresses for all of the ones for your thank-you notes and send them a few at a time. When you write to Oma and Papa, maybe you could thank them for having you visit, and taking you to the MTC, as well as for birthday things. I could send the rough drafts of the notes you already wrote, if you like.

That reminds me, the notecards and letter paper you have are good for using at the MTC, but Sis. Ogden said Karen gets paper down in Brazil that is really thin, because it's expensive to send letters from there, so if you use lightweight paper it costs less. So, use and enjoy the paper while you're in the States, but get different paper when you get to Brazil.

Now for things I would like to know:

Did you get started with learning and classes right away, the first day, or did you have a day of orientation? Who is your companion? Is the companion you have in the MTC one who will also be going to your mission, or is he one who might be going somewhere else? Will you have the same companion the whole time in the MTC? Which day is your p-day? What do you do on p-day? (Temple? Laundry? Letter-writing? What else?) What is your schedule like there? Is it the same every day? I

would love to know details, even things like if your alarm clock works all right to wake you up, where do you get laundry detergent, what you are eating, and all kinds of things.

Okay, here are a couple of spiritual things I was thinking about. When you said on Tuesday night that you missed home, I knew exactly how you felt. I have felt that way, even when I was visiting Oma and Papa (and I used to live in that house!), because I love our home and family so much. Then the line of the hymn, "More Holiness Give Me" came to me, ". . . more freedom from earth stains, more longing for home." And I thought of how if we remembered our Heavenly Home, we would do anything, anything at all, to be able to return back. The veil is drawn, in part as a blessing to us, so that we can go forth with faith and not be paralyzed by homesickness while we're here on earth. But we need to want to return there, long for it, badly enough to live in such a way that we can! Also, Heavenly Father knows what I'm feeling, knows how it feels to send His son away to bless and help people. Only in His case, it was to help His other beloved children. And the people of Brazil are our brothers and sisters, too, and you get to help them and teach them and love them!

I love you very much, Phillip. I'm so pleased with what you are doing. I do miss you (a lot), and I'll be sure to knit and read and eat chocolate for compensation :). But most of all, I'll pray, and trust in the Lord, and look forward to hearing about all of the things you are doing and learning, and the ways in which you are growing. Be sure to write! I love you!

Love,

Mom