



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

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## A letter from Dad: 4 July 2011

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John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Mon, Jul 4, 2011 at 11:19 AM

Reply-To: john@larsen-family.us

To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: joyce@larsen-family.us

Hello Dear Phillip,

Facebook Friend requests. Should I accept these?

Busologo Benicio Santos

Olavo Rubens

### ANSWERS TO YOUR PREVIOUS EMAIL:

Taylor didn't have much of an accent that I could detect, but he did slip up a few times during his talk and put Portuguese words in there without even realizing it.

Geoff did receive your letter. I asked him Sunday in priesthood opening exercises. He said he still needs to send you an email. He is busy busy like we all are. Hopefully he will send you an email soon.

### NEW STUFF:

The other day I was listening to chapters in the book of Alma. There are so many good stories in there. I had a couple of insights while listening. One was while listening to the account of Alma going to the city of Ammonihah, being rejected and leaving, and then being told by the angel to return. He does so and meets up with Amulek who takes him to his home. There Amulek is taught the gospel and believes it completely. He obviously has knowledge and power. This shows up when he is having the verbal exchange with Zeezrom. Amulek was able to discern Zeezrom's thoughts and intents through the power of the Holy Ghost. Later Alma and Amulek are thrown into prison. The chief judge and lawyers then force all the men who believe to leave the city. The women and children are cast into the fire along with their scriptures. Alma and Amulek are forced to watch the pain, suffering, and death of the women and children. (BTW, I think Amulek's wife and children were in the flames.) Amulek cries out to Alma saying they should call upon the powers of Heaven to stop this terrible event, and here is the insight that I had. Amulek was strong in his faith, had been ministered to by the Holy Spirit, was able to preach the gospel with power, but when it came to this horrible event he had to go to the Lord's chosen prophet of that time and leader of the church

to get the proper direction on what to do. So, even though Amulek had received revelations of his own and great spiritual insights, he had need to go to the Lord's prophet to know what to do.

The other insight that I received was while listening to the account of Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni and their brethren. They got permission from their father King Mosiah to go to the Lamanites and try to bring them to a knowledge of the gospel. They all journey together and then as they arrive in the land of Nephi they go their separate ways. They were all worthy missionaries and were striving to follow the spirit. Ammon was fortunate to find his way to King Lamoni's land. You know the story of the miraculous conversion of Lamoni and all his house. On the other hand, Aaron and the others ended up being cast out and finally imprisoned for long period of time until Ammon rescued them from prison. So, here is the insight... They were all worthy and striving. Some saw no success, only discouragement and prison. Ammon had great success. Were any of them less or more in the sight of the Lord? No, their efforts were all acceptable to the Lord. Their reward wasn't dependent on the outcome of their teaching and efforts, but rather on their faithfulness and their desires. I went to France, a land without much of the tribe of Ephraim, and spent two years in the labor without any "success." You have already had "success" through many baptisms on your mission. Can the success be only measured by the number of baptisms? I don't think so. I look at the blessings that I have received in my life. These all trace their roots back to having served a mission. Even though I had no "success" I have been blessed just as much as those who had many baptisms.

Sunday evening was the annual July 3rd concert given by the Merrimack Concert Band. The weather forecast was "iffy" so the decision was made to have the concert inside the high school. It didn't rain after all, and it was very VERY warm inside the high school, but there were NO bugs inside the high school either. It is always more fun outside, but this year the bugs would have eaten us all alive. The chorus was involved in the concert this year. A smaller group of them sang several numbers and that was nice. The 94th Army Band came up from CT again this year and joined us, more than doubling our number. They greatly added to the sound of the band, filling in the low end brass a lot. I have been practising a lot for this concert. My goal was to play a perfect concert, but I fell short of that. I made some mistakes, but far fewer than other concerts. There were some times when the band was so loud that I couldn't hear myself.

Joyce and Julia came to the concert, but Rachel was spending time with her family. Her grandparents from AZ are here visiting with her Uncle Jimmy (Tricia's brother). Her Mom asked her Saturday what time she was done with church. She said at noon and her Mom said that they wanted to do some family stuff and explained about her grandparents being in town. That is a good thing.

Joyce probably already told you about today's plans. At first we were going to walk in the Amherst town parade. Lisa Hansen has been getting people to sign up. Mitt Romney (who is running for president again) is walking in that parade with supporters. Joyce and I thought that would be fun to do, but then the 4th started getting busy so we backed out of the parade. I slept in instead, and that felt very good.

Today we will go down to Bradford's apartment. The plan is to take the movie 1776 with us to watch. We will then get some dinner. After that the plan is to go over to Tufts University and go to the roof top of a tall building there. From that vantage point we will watch the fireworks over in Boston. I believe the fireworks will be about 2 or 3 miles away. Bradford suggested doing this and it sounded like a fun time. So, that's what we will be doing. Because of that we will be skipping the Noel's cookout. It would be trying to cram too many things into the day.

We finally got Joyce a new cell phone. She has been annoyed for many months now with her old phone. At times the sound was so garbled that she couldn't understand what was being said. So, she finally sat down with me long enough to choose a new phone. It is pretty much a newer version of her old phone. The most annoying difference is that there is no way to get pictures off the phone without having a data plan and uploading to the web. Heather's phone is like that too. I don't want to upgrade our whole family to a data plan because that would almost double our bill and we don't have the phones to take advantage of that.

Saturday I finally was able to give the Toyota its annual vacuum and bath. While I was at it I also vacuumed out the Saturn, which was very filthy. I also gave the Saturn a quick rewash. It's amazing how fast that car gets dirty just sitting there.

I'm sitting here pondering the past week trying to remember what I've done. For the most part I just did the gym each morning, worked all day, practiced the sax in the evening, watched some TV with the family, did dress rehearsal with the band, went to church, did the concert, etc.

I have been thinking a lot about Stanford this past week. It has been hitting me a lot harder emotionally than in the previous long time. I'm not sure why. On Saturday I realized that I only had one good reed for my tenor saxophone and there was a concert the next day. That isn't a good thing. So, I decided that I would make a trip up to Manchester to the Music and Arts store to get some reeds. I researched online and figured out what I would get. Then out of curiosity I decided to check to see what kind of reeds Stanford was using on his alto. I remembered that there were some boxes of reeds in his case. I pulled out the box and it was the exact same reed that I had decided to buy for the tenor. It kind of hit me hard at that time that I was holding reeds that Stanford had chosen, and I cried. I drove up to the store and went through the doors. There on the left were all the instrument cases for sale, and it made me

emotional again, because it reminded me of the time I took Stanford to that store and we bought the case for his alto sax. There were several other experiences this week where I became very emotional.

I bore my testimony on Sunday about "seasons in life" and how my family is very similar in ages and numbers with the family I grew up in. Stanford was the second son, and I was the second son. This past week I listened to an interview with Elder Quinton L Cook and his wife, a podcast from [radio.lds.org](http://radio.lds.org). Their first pregnancy was twin boys, but one of them only lived 22 hours. Sister Cook explained how that event cemented the gospel into their lives. They already had one child who had made the entire journey back to Heavenly Father. This became a driving force for their family so that all of them would be worthy to return. In my testimony I explained how losing Stanford was a similar thing for me. It has made me reflect and ponder a lot. Having faith is a choice. I choose to believe. I don't have a perfect understanding of most things, so I have to live by faith. My testimony goes down and up. The doubts come in and go out. My closeness to the spirit weakens and strengthens. It is important for me to keep feeding the spirit by attending church, praying, listening to inspirational messages and scriptures during my daily commutes, and striving to be worthy of the spirit. It's a choice. Let's choose to believe and serve. Let's strive to be righteous. Let's repent as often as we need to. Let's always remember that Heavenly Father loves each of us. He wants us to succeed. He wants us to come back to him. We can do it, but only with his help.

I hope things are going well with you. I think about you a lot every day. I'm proud of you and am grateful that you have this opportunity to serve the Lord.

Love,

Dad

#### ATTACHED PICTURES:

On Sunday Sister Branco posted a picture to your Facebook wall of you with their family. I have reattached that picture to this email along with all the Facebook comments below. Hopefully you can understand what they have said because I don't.

- [Elder Phillip Larsen](#) Awesome picture (Phillip's Dad posting this)  
[11 hours ago](#)

- 

Submit

[Bina Castelo Branco](#) thanks!  
[11 hours ago](#)

-

Submit

[Bina Castelo Branco](#) you son is a god mitionary

11 hours ago

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Submit

[Tânia Revoredo](#) putz [Laécio Castelo Branco](#), teu inglês é show, rrsrs Mas eu entendi, "você filho é um deus mitionary (não consegui entender se é milionário ou missinário...)"... O.ô kkkkk (brincadeirinha)

9 hours ago · 1 person [Bina Castelo Branco](#) likes this.

•  
Submit

[Bina Castelo Branco](#) dixa p lá tô quase dormindo

8 hours ago

•  
Submit

[Bina Castelo Branco](#) deixa

8 hours ago

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Submit

[Bina Castelo Branco](#) pior tãnia q num foi ele, fui eu a Bina, é q a Sara e a Bel inventam de jogar no notebook dele, dai desconfiguram o teclado, e como digito olhando p teclado 1º publico dpois presto atenção q errei...kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk

8 hours ago

•  
Submit

[Bina Castelo Branco](#) mas valew

8 hours ago

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Submit

[Tânia Revoredo](#) kkkkkkkkkkkk, desculpado!

8 hours ago

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Submit

[Laécio Castelo Branco](#) Vixe não fui eu...

The second picture attached was taken one evening this past week. I was standing there and Julia assumed "the position" and then Heather came over and also assumed "the position" for some rubby-bub.

The next two pictures are from last Saturday evening when we had the missionaries over again for dinner. Elder Stephens just transferred in Thursday from Connecticut. I think we mentioned at some point that the Connecticut Hartford Mission was discontinued and combined with the MA Boston Mission. Well, that happened this past week. The CHM had about 70 missionaries. Every companionship was affected by the transfer. A missionary from the MBM and the former CHM traded places. Elder Stephens came here and Elder Sorel went there. I really like Elder Stephens.

The next picture was taken Friday, July 1st. It shows that the floating house has settled back down to earth on its new foundation.

Roberta Fernandes tagged you in several pictures so I attached those. Who is the Elder you are with? Also, you should tell Roberta that your Grandma Larsen is also named "Roberta"

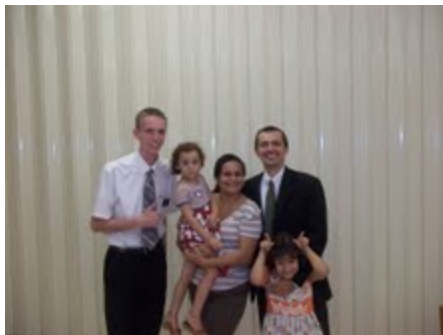
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John R Larsen <[john@larsen-family.us](mailto:john@larsen-family.us)>  
<http://larsen-family.us>

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**9 attachments**



**Castelo\_Branco\_Family.jpg**  
388K



**Img\_0386.jpg**  
139K



**Img\_0387.jpg**  
152K



**Img\_0388.jpg**  
151K



**SSPX0520.jpg**  
316K



**Roberta\_Fernandes\_and\_Elder\_Larsen.jpg**  
60K



**Roberta\_Fernandes\_and\_Elder\_Larsen2.jpg**  
63K



**Roberta\_Fernandes\_and\_Elder\_Larsen3.jpg**  
67K



**Elder\_Larsen\_and\_Elder\_Companion.jpg**  
58K