

Dear Family,

30 November 1999

I took the opportunity during welfare committee meeting a couple of hours prior to the Fast meeting in which Lucy was blessed to question why it is that we perform this non-saving, non-essential ordinance during sacrament meeting. It's just that I felt so guilty taking up valuable testimony meeting time—time, which as everyone knows, might have been used to squeeze in one more travelogue of someone's latest jaunt to Utah or the holy land (or both—for those delusional people who cling to the notion that the two places are one and the same.) Although no one in welfare had a very good explanation, (outside of the always popular & drab high road 'because it's in the handbook') we went ahead with the blessing.

The blessed event was attended by all of Lucy's local Henrichsen family. They were joined by Lucy's Willis grandparents and Uncle Pete who made the arduous 2 1/2-hour drive from South Jersey, and Lucy's Kent grandparents who made the significantly longer journey from North Idaho—and all this for a non-saving ordinance...we can't wait for Hannah to get baptized.

We spent the day before with the grandparents from afar while the grandparents from anear attended the temple. Saturday's highlight was a 30-mile excursion to Fort McHenry in Baltimore. For you non-historians, it was over Fort McHenry that flew the flag Francis Scott Key noted was "still there" in the midst of "rockets' red glare" and "bombs bursting in air" during the British siege of Washington and Maryland in the War of 1812. The huge flag flying there now is only a replica of the one that inspired Key. But Hannah, who for some reason is really into flags, was quite enamored with it all the same. Peter preferred scaling the embankments—to no one's surprise, he was particularly drawn to those with signs reading, "Please keep off the embankments."

Hannah's clinginess continues. I suppose both that it's Lucy-related and that there are worse things. I have a hard time believing that Hannah is only a month away from starting Primary. We've started teaching her primary songs so that she'll have an advantage over the other kids. Overly ambitious Mormon parents that we are, we'd like to see her skip Star A, and get into the 11-year-old Beehive track. Lucy still likes to eat (or suck, or whatever) and is beautiful and healthy, etc. etc.

Crystal and I had dental check-ups this month. No cavities. Congratulatory lollipops should be sent to 10307 Folk St; Silver Spring MD 20902.

Thanksgiving week was a lot of fun. We drove up to Moorestown on Tuesday night partly to beat the Wednesday traffic, but mostly to maximize our time with Grant & Jen, who'd been there since Saturday, and Grandma & Coco, who came on Monday. Mom & Grandma were kind enough to tend Hannah while Crystal, Lucy, Jen, Grant, Coco and I spent Wednesday in New York...so much for avoiding the Wednesday traffic. We were mostly tagging along with Grant, who had an interview with the Dean of Admissions at Columbia Law School. While Grant was busy schmoozing, the rest of us did your basic Manhattan tourist 5th Avenue thing with stops at the New York Public Library (pretty cool), the NBA Boutique (really cool), FAO Schwarz (too crowded to breathe), St Patrick's Cathedral (we took turns making immature comments about Catholicism in the middle of mass), the Plaza (lots of rich people), and Central Park (we didn't get mugged.) Lucy was an angel and slept through just about everything, barely waking up even to eat (or suck, or whatever.)

We were especially grateful that our normally faithful Mercury Sable, which, it turned out, needed a new alternator, decided to die in front of my parents' house rather than on I-95 in Delaware...or anywhere else, for that matter.

Thanksgiving reminded me how much I enjoy living near and being with people I like. It was a lot of fun being with Grant & Jen as we all got back in touch with our Mid-Atlantic roots through its haute cuisine (i.e. cheesesteaks from Gaetano's and Friendly's Reese's Pieces Sundaes.) What a culture!

Seasons Greetings. Love,
Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy.