

TWO LETTERS FROM MOM

In 1996 my wife and I had two sons, ages four and seven. We were a typical busy young family. Late one night my wife made time to write a letter to my nephew, Glen, who was then serving a mission in Finland.

For some reason, she felt she needed to write a long letter—one filled with details about what each family member was doing, where they were spiritually, what was happening in my Church calling and in her Church calling, the story of her conversion, her feelings about missionary work, and her testimony of the gospel.

It was a great letter, but I wondered if my nephew really needed that much information. Later she wrote him again.

Six years later, while I was serving as bishop and our boys were 10 and 13, my world suddenly changed. On January 2, 2002, my wife, only 42 years old, died of a heart attack.

At home I tried to continue following the principles in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”¹ I found that I could preside and provide, but I fell short in giving my sons the nurturing they needed. Nevertheless, we moved on as best we could.

In June 2012 my younger son, Sam, then serving a full-time mission in the Colorado Denver South Mission, sent me an email. “Something really cool happened this week,” he wrote. “I got two letters from Mom.”

He explained that he had received a package from his cousin Glen that

included the letters she had written to him while he was in Finland.

“He told me that these two letters Mom sent him on his mission were really written for me while on my mission,” Sam wrote. “So he sent them to me, and they were incredible!”

Learning of his mother’s conversion, testimony, and feelings toward missionary work was “a great moral support at this time,” Sam wrote. He said he planned to photocopy the letters and send the originals home.

“I had no idea that you had ever served as an elders quorum president or as the ward mission leader,” Sam wrote. He learned that when he was four years old, he “would jump on the bed after prayers and shout ‘I want to be a missionary.’”

The letters were powerful, personal, and poignant when written in 1996, but given the events of subsequent years, they had become even more so.

Then he added something he had learned about his mother: “Mom must have known that I would become a wrestler because she said that I could charm the socks off a pro wrestler. :)”

I was moved to tears by Sam’s reaction to the letters. A few weeks later he mailed them home. They were powerful, personal, and poignant when written in 1996, but given the events of subsequent years, they had become even more so.

My wife’s letters had strengthened my nephew, but like “casting bread upon the water” (see Ecclesiastes 11:1), they returned years later to bless her missionary son and widowed husband. ■

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NOTE

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.

