

[Letter continued from Mart Christiansen to Viola, July 6, 1910.]

First of all I will say that is certainly a fine looking daughter you have got, something to be proud of and her daddy certainly is that as he shows her to his friends here and walks around so smart when they make some flattering remarks, he seems to think she is about the only one year old on that side of the globe (of course he don't consider this side). I suppose when he gets home she will wonder who that strange man is and what he is doing around there. When he gets home he will be so Swedish that he won't know what she means (I suppose she will talk by that time) if she won't say, "God dag far," so I think you should teach her to say that. Maybe when he reads this he won't send it so I will write something else.

I have been here over a week now visiting Niels which he will no doubt tell you and have had a good time although it has rained every day. I am certainly glad to see the progress Niels has made here, he has the confidence and good will of all the saints and a great deal of nonmembers so it shows he has been doing a good work. I suppose you can imagine it is a great pleasure to us both to meet again in this land and talk over Old Times, but the greatest pleasure is in seeing an old friend progressing so grandly in the good work of the Lord and being able to successfully weather all the storms of the adversary and continue in the path of truth and righteousness as he has done. Well I won't say any more in that line as I suppose you already know my opinions anyway. As for myself I am enjoying my labors and the abundant blessings of the Lord which I receive from time to time and hope that I may be able to continue in the labors and prove worthy of being called a Messenger of Truth.

May the Lord bless you and yours with health and strength and the necessities of life that you may again be united with husband and father and that you may now and hereafter understand and share the fruits of the good seed he is here sowing, is the wish and prayer of your friend and brother in the Great Cause, Martin C.

Gefle, July 6, 1910

My Dear Wife & Daughter;

Once more I will chalk down a few lines and send to you for your inspection. Will first thank you ever so much for the proofs of sweet little Melba which accompanied your welcome letter of June 15th. She certainly is cute and I want to tell you that she takes the eyes of all who have looked at the photos. The people ask me if I don't feel proud over my little daughter and if I am not homesick to see her in reality. Well dearest I certainly am proud and thankful for her and would like very well to see her but I suppose she will keep and when I get home she will be all the cuter for according to your letters and according to the photos she is getting cuter all the time. I don't know which one of the proofs I like the best for they are all so good. I like the one you said you had selected and I also like the one where she is playing with her toes.

Well my dear wife, I was favored with the presence of my friend Mart as I told you I was expecting when I wrote you last. He is with me yet and at present he is writing you a few lines to go in with mine.

It has been raining every since he came here and then some, so it hasn't been so pleasant weather, but we have enjoyed ourselves first rate anyway. He was with us at our MIA meeting Thursday. We got our Sunday School, Fast meeting and Public meeting on Sunday and he had the pleasure of speaking at them all. He has the language pretty fair and he is quite a speaker. He will show you how it's done when he comes home.

Bro. Woodard and Bro. Lavin and his sister came back to Gefle last night. They have had an extraordinary good time on their trip to Hammerfest and all through Norway. They claim to have had a very good feast on natural scenery and I don't doubt their word at all for I have also had the pleasure of seeing a part of that wonderful land. Bro. Lavin's mother is also here at present so they are having quite a reunion in this city. We will hold an extra meeting this eve to give the people another chance to hear Bro. Lavin preach.

Tomorrow morning Elder Christiansen and I will leave Gefle and ride the train to a place named Uppsala. Here we intend to remain over one day and attend the meeting which the elders will hold there. On Friday morning we will continue on our journey and arrive at Stockholm in the forenoon. There is going to be a big conference at Stockholm July 10th and that is the reason I am going to leave Gefle. I suppose you know Pres. Penrose has been released and Pres. Ruder Clauson has taken his place; well Pres. Clauson is making a tour through Europe now visiting all the missions so that is the reason we are going to have a general conference at Stockhom. All the elders are invited to attend but I don't think there will be so many present as there were last summer. Elders Woodard and Benson are also going but they won't go when Mart and I go. It certainly will be nice to visit Stockholm again and partake of the good meeting that will be dealt out to us. Pres. Andrew Jenson from Denmark will also be present at the conference. I wish you could be with, dear wife, so I could show you around in the great city of Stockholm. Mart is pretty well acquainted in the city being as he labored there a little more than a year.

Well dear Viola I am pleased to hear that your father liked the letter which I sent him and that he sent you such a nice letter and the sum of \$5. The people seem to be very good to you and Melba. Probably when I come home you will not think I am half as good as other people are to you. It seems as though they all remembered the birthday of little Melba. I suppose I should have sent her a present but it isn't so safe nor wise to be sending things from here. I can buy her something when I come home instead. I believe it would be pleasant to kiss her nice fat feet now but perhaps I can get you to do that for me and then when I come home I will pay the bill by kissing both you and Melba until you get tired of me. Hope you are all well and making the best of conditions as they are and as they come. Be prayerful dear wife and the Lord will bless you. Be sure to remember your husband in your prayers for he certainly needs them for without the help of the divine inspiration my effort will be in vain. Be good to me dearest and favor me with a letter as often as possible. Your loving husband Niels.

[While we're on the subject of Mart Christiansen, knowing that he only visited Niels once while they were in Sweden, I want to quote a few comments he made at Niels' funeral in 1958: "My folks moved into my grandfather's home when I was about a year old, and that was about the time Niels was born across the street; and we, of course, grew up together. We spent a lot of time together, more than our mothers wanted us to probably.

Sister Fugal was either over after him or mother was after me to get us home to eat and get us home to put us to bed; and as we grew older, I went over there and lived. Three summers I lived with the Fugal family.

“Niels and I operated the farm under the direction of Jens and Chris. I might say that his father died when we were just youngsters...then Jens and Chris were the head of the family; and I would like to digress briefly and pay tribute to them. They organized an organization known as the Fugal Brothers; and Niels and I had a great deal to be grateful for, for the example they set, ...and the things they taught us, how to work and how to operate our own lands; and a great deal of this integrity which you’ve heard here I think can be due to them. I would like to say in honor of Chris who is the last one here today (died 1962, age 86), I honor him, and Jens who has passed away (1945, age 71). They were great individuals....

“Jens taught us how to plow a straight row of corn and potatoes and he taught us so that we could do it just as good as he could or any other farmer in the North Field.... A lot of the farmers out there made the remark, ‘Those two boys do more work than any three men in the North Field.’ We learned how to work and we learned how to operate the team and operate the equipment and put the hay in the barn when we were about fourteen or fifteen years old. Niels was always a strong, hard worker. I was working under him then, of course, but he and I did the farming. About that time, Chris...had the shop... built. Niels says, ‘If you will hire Mart, we can tend mason,’ to Chris, and we did. We mixed the mud and we put the brick on the scaffold and we kept him a going. And we had a lot of fun doing it. We enjoyed it.” While on the subject of passings, Carrie died in 1928, almost age 49, and Stena in 1953, age 71. Their husband John died in 1937, at age 63.]

Pleasant Grove, Ut., July 10, 1910

My Dear Husband:

It has been over a week since I wrote to you and so I guess it’s about time I was writing again. It has been over a week since I rec’d your last letter and it was such a nice letter I wanted to sit right down and answer it then but I was so busy, it was just before the fourth you know and we had lots of sewing and then I was up here to your mother’s two days in the week picking berries. Your mother takes care of Melba while I help with the berries but they will soon be a thing of the past.

What did you do on the fourth Nels? Esther and Ike were down and they and Annie went to Provo but Stena and I picked berries all day. I went to the dance that night with Esther and Ike and had a very nice time. I believe I told you about going to that Scandinavian dance. I had quite a nice time that night but a better one on the fourth. Annie went back up to Salt Lake with Esther and so I have been staying up here since she left. Esther has to have her baby circumcised. I don’t think I will live with Annie any longer, I am thinking quite seriously of going to Abraham and stay till you come home.

I went to Sunday School today in the third ward and enjoyed it very much. If I am up here again next Sunday I will go again. Lavina gave the lesson and she did it very nicely.

If it is always given as well as it was today anyone could learn quite a bit just listening. Melba was as good as could be and she looked just like a little wax doll. Oh I'd give anything if you could see her. Say Nels do you remember when George Larson was married? They have two babies now, isn't that going some! They were married about the same time we were. Well Nels in three more months it will be two years and then I hope it won't be long before you will be home. Next Wednesday the Old Folks are going to Alpine and they came and invited me so if all is well I suppose your mother, Stena and I will go to Alpine.

It's Sunday afternoon and if you were only here we might take a little ride. Melba gets sweeter every day, she is learning to walk all alone and it does look so cute, she shuts her eyes and holds her hands out toward someone and then goes as fast as she can run across the floor. She can say papa now when I tell her to but I guess she doesn't know what it means. She says ta-ta when she wants to go or when anyone else is going. She says kitty kitty when she sees the cat and chick chick when she sees the chickens. She is getting to be quite a talker. Saturday and Sunday the 23 and 24 of July is Alpine Stake Conference to be held here. I don't know of any more news. I hope you are well and enjoying your labors. Write often, your loving Viola.

Pleasant Grove, Utah, July 16th 1910

My Dear Brother –

This is about the third letter I have started to write you and not got it finished. I hope you will pardon my slowness in answering your very welcome letters, I say letters, as I received another today and have not answered the one previously received. Your letter of June 17th contained some interesting news of your conference. I am glad they like to hear you preach, no doubt you can pound the pulpit now. Wish I could step in your meeting some Sunday and hear you preach. There is no danger of us thinking that you will become conceited, that is a trait wherein you are weak if anything. But better be like you are than like Bro. C., he has plenty and some to spare. He had not been gone more than a couple of months till he thot they could not do without him. But I see they are getting along without him. We rather enjoyed your letter telling the nice things the Swedes says about you, because we know they are true and it is nice to know what you are doing and how you are appreciated.

You stated in your letter that I received today that Mart had baptized twelve persons and you only five. You must not get discouraged, as perhaps someone else converted Mart's subjects, and no doubt you are making converts for someone else to baptize a year hence. Who knows? There are some elders that spend their mission without baptizing any converts and they do much good just the same. I don't know but what there is just as much honor in being a bass singer in Gefle as being a choir leader in Norrköping. If I don't stop writing like this you will think I am getting preachy and I don't want you to think that.

This month we have been busy with the raspberries, we pick two days out of the week and sometimes a little more. They are turning out fine, we will have jut as many as we did last year and they are higher in price. Uncle Magnus is buying them this year, the

highest we have had is \$1.25 per case and the lowest \$.75, and Charley Magnus got those, so you see that is pretty good. We had our first picking June 27th and last year we did not pick until after the 4th of July. Everything is looking fine in spite of the drought, but say! we had quite a shower this afternoon, she just more than poured for a little while. I think all of the dust is mostly settled. [I would be curious to know where the berry patch was in thinking back to the luscious berries my dad Neil grew behind "the cottage," and I would also like to know where Magnus lived.]

Your wife has been with us for the last week and if you could peek in our house at present you would see us all as follows: it is now 10:30 p.m. Mother, Ernest and Melba are sleeping soundly and Viola is sitting here pencil in hand just more than writing to her Swedish husband, by the way she is writing she does not lack for anything to write about. I am sitting at the other side a scratching off a line to you too, and Chris has gone down town to get a shave as it is Sunday tomorrow.

We sent you "Orson Pratt's Works" yesterday together with the picture of your little daughter, don't you think she is cute? She has started to walk now and she goes like a streak, she is at one door one minute and at the other the next. She keeps her mommy busy watching her. She is cuter than ever now she can say papa and dad and many other things. (Don't you think I knew?) Last Wednesday Viola, Melba, mother, Ernest and I went to Alpine to attend the old folks party of the Alpine Stake, we had a good time and saw Alpine for the first time in our lives. It is quite a nice little place up against the mountains. There was nearly a thousand present at the party. P.G. was well represented. You may soon look for the Liahona, will send it presently.

Some of the dry farmers have commenced threshing, the wheat is pretty good considering but it is not heavy. Chris is very busy in the shop, he has had lots of tire setting to do on account of the dry weather. They have sold lots of binders and other things. Will get Chris to write you all about the shop affairs in the future else I will do it myself. Jens is busy plumbing. John and Carrie were over tonight. We are all well as we hope you are. Be good to yourself and write soon, don't be pokey like I am. Your Sis. Stena.

Gefle, July 22, 1910

My Dear Viola;

Once more I will endeavor to write you some more about myself and affairs here in this part of the world. I am a very long distance from you, but perhaps when you read my letters you can paint some picture in your mind of the place I have been lately, and see me going about my work. It is 4:30 p.m. now and at 3:05 p.m. we were at the depot to bid goodbye to Elder David W. Woodard. I don't know when I will see him again, probably never, but I hope I do, for I love him and I love to be in his company for he is certainly an exemplary man and is ever ready to show kind actions to everybody. It seems pretty hard to part with him, but I suppose it will go OK anyway. I am thankful that I had the privilege of laboring with him five months and now as he has been in Sweden thirty-two months I think it no more than right that he should travel towards home. He has made many friends while in Sweden and the fruits of his labors will no doubt show in the future.

Sister Maria Johansson is going to leave here in the morning for her journey to America also. She will leave Copenhagen in company with Bro. Woodard and Bro. Lavin and his mother and sister. They will be in their company all the way to Salt Lake City. It is almost worse to have her leave us than Bro. Woodard for she is our organist and is the best singer we have. It seems as though it is all coming in on us at once and it leaves us in a bad condition, but it is to be hoped that matters will turn out for the best.

We must never get an idea into our heads that the success of the gospel depends upon one or two persons, but that if it be the will of God that the work shall prosper, He will prepare a way. We haven't anyone else at present that can play chords on the organ so our singing will not be as powerful as heretofore, and you know it is the singing that gives life and in many times the best part of the meeting, especially when such weak mortals as some of we elders are to interest the people with our sermons.

Sister Johansson has been a faithful sister ever since she came into the church last fall and now her empty chair will not make a very pleasant impression. I wish you were here and I would see that you learned to play the organ for us. I am a little downhearted dear wife, but I hope I will soon be a little more cheerful, and be able to see wherein all the dealings of the Lord are blessings, even if at times they appear trials.

Bro. Woodard has promised to call upon you when he gets there, if he possible can, and I think he can. Sister Johansson says she may go with him to Pleasant Grove and see my folks and my wife and child. I hope she does and if so, don't be afraid of her just because she is a Swede, but talk English to her and she will understand you quite well for she has been in America ten months before, and then she has been learning some English from the elders. She intends to get work in S.L.C. but it would be nice for her to spend a week in P.G. to rest up from her trip.

Well dear Viola I am pleased to announce that in about five hours I am gong to baptize three converts. They are all ladies over fifty years old. The two of them are my converts and the other one has been investigating for about one year. It seems nice to see fruits of your own work and be able to baptize those who have accepted the glad tidings which you revealed to them. That will make eight that I have led into the waters of baptism, but the most of them are the fruits of previous elders' labors. I hope I may also be able to sow some good seeds that will grow and bear fruit for future elders. I hope we will be able to stir up the hearts of more honest souls while I am here in Gefle and if possible add several more to the fold.

In 1909 they baptized 12 in the Gefle Branch. After tonight we will have reached that number for 1910, and prospects are good for more this year. The gospel is progressing rapidly all over the world. In 1909 there were nearly 15,000 who were added to the church. In Sweden there were 140 added in 1909. Already this year over 100 have joined the church in Sweden. I love Sweden, I love the people and I love to act as an ambassador of God's great latter day work among them, trying to select the chosen seed of Israel from them, and to be a real fisher of men. When I stop to consider, I am nearing the close of my mission, it causes me to reflect back upon my labors, and wonder if I really have accomplished much, but it isn't for me to be judge of these matters. Just be

industrious and try to profit by the many mistakes I have made in the twenty months of my mission and see if I can make a good record in the time I have left. Probably I will never have the privilege of performing a second or a third mission so it is my desire and duty to be faithful to my calling and put forth great efforts.

I will now close my letter, darling wife, hoping you are happy and content in your home in dear old Utah. It is 12 days since I received your last so am waiting anxiously. Kiss dear Melba for me and accept xxxooxx yourself. Your Nels.

Pleasant Grove, July 29, 1910

Dear Nels:

I rec'd your welcome letter about a week ago and was pleased to hear that you liked the proofs and think your little daughter is sweet. Mart seems to think she is alright too doesn't he Nels. If you could just see how cute she acts you would think she is lots sweeter.

I have been staying up to your mother's ever since a few days after the fourth. We went to Provo in the surrey last week to see Carrie. She has a pretty little place there in Provo. On the 24th of July J.P. Fugal's barn was burned to the ground. They were all down to the celebration and it was almost gone before they could get up to it.

Helen Smith Walker has a baby boy.

I am sorry that your partner has left you and hope that you will soon get another that you like as well.

Esther and Ike were here for the 24th and we all went to the dance at night and had quite a nice time. Lawrence Monson came and shook hands with me and said to give you his best regards. Alma Langston is home from his mission. Pa says he weighs two hundred and has a black mustache. Don't you dare to let your mustache grow Nels for I just can't stand a man with a mustache.

Well dearest it will soon be two years since you left and then I will start to looking for your release. I believe I will be the happiest person in the world.

We were thinking that maybe Aunt Margaret would be living with Lizzie when you come and then we could rent her house. How would you like that Nels?

I don't know of any more news but will write again soon. Melba sends a kiss to Papa. She can say Papa and kisses so cute. Write often to your loving Wife and Baby.

Pleasant Grove, Utah, July 29th 1910

My Dear Brother –

We received your very welcome letter a couple of days ago and it was certainly read with

pleasure. Glad you enjoyed yourself at conference, it does one good to go to conference where they can hear good gospel sermons.

I suppose you are lonesome now that Bro. Woodard has gone home, but you must brace up and bear it, we hope they will send you another good companion so you will not have to work so much. But at the same time the missionaries are divided off in pairs, one heavy weight or good preacher and one that is inexperienced or that cannot preach much. We think that you are a good preacher and will do alright even if your companion is not so much.

It is very nice that you and Mart could be together again, even if it was only for a short time. I am afraid you did not sleep much while you were together as you would have to converse every minute that you could. No doubt you have mentioned everybody and everything in P.G.

Stake conference was held in P.G. last Saturday and Sunday. The meetings were fine. Apostle Penrose was here to all the meetings and spoke in them all. He doesn't lack for anything to say.

The Sunday schools of the three wards celebrated the 24th of July in the Grove on Monday. They all seemed to have a good time. While we were down to the Grove Jens' barn burnt up. It was alright about two o'clock and they put a half a load of wild hay in the barn at noon. Mr. Jarvis phoned down town and there was a large crowd came but nothing could be done as it was already gone. We do not know how it got started. It had a little insurance on it but it is quite a loss.

You asked how many horses we had (in one of your letters). I will mention them. Dan, Mack and Kate are all the horses we have at home. Bess is sold. Skank is up to Corn Jenson waiting until it gets cold weather and then Corn will feed her to the chickens. She was too old to be of any more use. The colts are up on the mountains, there are four of them. The boys have commenced to cut the second crop of lucerne and the wild hay is mowed and some of it hauled. We are through with the raspberries now, they have done very well. The currants and cherries are done for too. We have sold some peaches and we will have a pretty good crop of the later peaches as well. Uncle Magnus is buying our fruit, he has bought all so far. You asked for some addresses. I will write them now before I forget (Mrs. Carl Gustafson and Mrs. Andrew Poulson, Sandy). You will see by the addresses that they have the same mail box. I'll bet that elder from Sandy did laugh when you started to mimic Poulson. Who would not? Ha-ha.

Viola is by the machine sewing herself a nice house dress and your little daughter is helping grandma wash the dishes. You can't imagine what lots of things she can help do. She walks around all over now and jabbars a great deal. I am sure you could understand every word. She would like to have my pencil right now but of course I can't spare it, here is her hand writing: "hello dad."

The boys are very busy at present and have been for some time, both thresher machines are in the yard for repairs and other things. There are between twenty and fifty old buggies on the place at present. If there were any more, I would let you know. Ike

Carlson is helping Chris in the shop, Alvin Carlson is with Jens plumbing and Lew and Rulan are farming.

You will find a check for \$50.00 enclosed in this letter. We thot you would be out of money but somehow have put off sending any until you sent for some. We are all as well as usual and feeling pretty good. I hope you will excuse this scribbling as I have been in a hurry, I want it to go before the bank closes. But you have time to make her out you know. Have you received the Liahona, you should have received two copies when you receive this letter or perhaps but one. Mother is sending a song for you to read, she thought you would enjoy it. Be good to yourself Niels as Ernest says and write soon to your long winded Sis. Stena.

Gefle, July 29, 1910

My Darling Wife;

Your nice letter came to hand and was read with pleasure. It came while I was at Söderhamn so I did not get a chance to read it until I came back. It is over two weeks since I received your last, so you can imagine that it was nice to once more read a few of my darling wife's thoughts written upon paper.

I suppose you have a great dealt to do this time of the year and cannot find time to accomplish as much as you desire. You mentioned in your letter that you had been picking berries up to mother's and that you even was picking on the 4th of July. It is too bad that you couldn't have that day off and have a good time, but I suppose you are not so anxious to celebrate now being as you have a babe to tend and you have no husband to accompany you. Pleased to note that you went to the dance in the evening and that you enjoyed yourself. That's right dear, go to the dances whenever you have the chance and make life as pleasant as possible. If I were home we would certainly have that buggy ride that you mentioned in your letter, and when I do come home, we will see that it happens.

The mailman just came and brought me a letter from Pres. Beckstrom's wife and also that book which I asked Stena to send me. In the book was little Melba anxiously awaiting me to open the cover so she could see her Swedish dad. She could not speak to me but I read on the back of the photo that she had come to see her Swedish dad. Well, she is welcome and I will try to use her well while she is here. She is so cute that it almost makes me homesick. It would be fun to maul her a bit and tickle her feet and kiss her toes. Oh! but she is sweet. Just the picture of her dad. (?) But we had better give her mama the honor of her beauty, for fear she might feel slighted. Many thanks for sending the photo, I appreciate it very much. I was glad to receive the book for I think I can learn a great deal by reading it, and probably can get some good clear principles to present to the people. It was kind of Pres. Beckstrom's wife to send me a letter. It shows that she appreciated the one I sent her.

Well dear, I will now tell you a little about our trip to Söderhamn. We left here on Monday 1:55 p.m. and arrived there the same evening at 5:30. Sister Lindgren received us with a warm handshake and soon we were seated at a nice supper. In the evening after supper she took us to the Engstöm Family of saints. Here we remained a couple of hours

talking and singing after which we went back to Sister Lindgren's and had a good night's rest. The following morning about 11 o'clock in company with Sister Lindgren we walked six miles to a place called Lervik. Bro. and sister Pettersson live here and we found ourselves welcomed here. Sister Pettersson is 78 years old and Bro. Pettersson is 66 years. Sister Lindgren is 52 years old but nevertheless she is good at the walk anyway. It takes a good walker to stay with the elders. In the afternoon we went out tracting and met with good success. I had some good gospel conversations while out. Sister Lindgren went home on the boat, but we remained all night with the saints at Lervik.

The next day Bro. Pettersson who is a lawyer helped us to secure a place in Söderhamn to hold a free or open air meeting. We placed an ad in the paper so as to get the people out. We were to hold the meeting at 8 p.m. and we were there ready to start at that time, but we had no one to listen to us except a few children who had assembled to see the wonderful Mormons. About 8:10 a few came and we opened with a song, prayer and a song. By this time there were about 50 people present and others still coming from every direction. I asked Bro. Pettersson to speak first which he did. He spoke only a short time leaving the time for us. While he was speaking I was trembling like a leaf shaken by a breeze. Bro. Benson spoke for about 5 minutes and the balance of the time was for me. I selected the highest elevation that I could find, and then in my weak and humble way talked to them for an hour.

[Letter from Niels to Viola, continued, next set.]