

DOWN HOME: A letter to Ezra, my 1st grandchild

January 28, 2011

Dear Ezra,

The moment your wail blared out the birthing-room door and across the hall, my heart did backflips. Nana, your daddy's mother, and I looked at each other and proclaimed, "Ezra's here!"

Across years to come, I'll dry your tears and calm your sobs. But in that moment, your full-throated cry sounded absolutely splendid. You announced your arrival into this magnificent, lovely, frightful, mysterious, crowded, ever-changing world. It will be a far, far better place because you have joined us.

When I entered the room where you were born, I didn't know which way to look first. After all, you are my first grandchild, but Lindsay, your mama, is my baby, and Jody, your grandmama, is the love of my life. So, I checked to see that your mama was OK, and Jody gave me a million-watt smile. And then, like a heart-magnet, you pulled me to your crib.

Molly, your Auntie M, knows I like to joke that most babies look quite a bit like Winston Churchill—all chubby, round and wrinkled. But even with marks of the forceps still on the sides of your little head, you were just beautiful. Someday, you'll want people to call you handsome. (I had to settle for what Jody calls cute.) But for now, you are indisputably beautiful, because God made you that way.

Well, I'm looking forward to being your grandfather. When I was about your age, I started getting acquainted with Pop and Popo, my grandfathers, and they gave me an excellent orientation into grandfatherhood. The main

thing I remember about them was how we had fun. And so I hope that in 54 years, when you are the age I am now, and I am gone to heaven, you'll look forward to fun times with your grandchildren because you and I had so much fun together.

Many of my friends who already are grandparents tell me my job is to spoil you. I'm not so sure I totally agree with that. See, I'm a little bit scared of your mama. She is my daughter, but she's also kinda tough, and I don't want to cross her—too much, anyway.

Still that doesn't mean we can't pretty much do what we want to do. I'm not quite certain what that means with a little boy, since your mama and Auntie M are girls. Most likely, we'll play a lot more ball, and maybe go fishing and swimming, and take rides in the car just to get away by ourselves. We'll eat plenty of ice cream and watermelon. And we'll read books together. That was one of the best things I did with your mama.

Jody and I will do everything we can to help your mama and daddy as they raise you in what the Bible calls the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." No matter what else any of us do for you, teaching you to love God and follow Jesus will be the best gift we can give you.

I love you, my little man,

Marvo