



November 1993

Dear Friends,

As you may know, I made a pledge many years ago not to devote this monthly letter to our financial situation until absolutely required to do so. Indeed, it has been 14 months since I wrote to request your help. But now the time has come once more to share our need. The explanation that follows is addressed specifically to those who love this ministry and want to know how we're doing.

Focus on the Family has come through a wonderful year of blessings by the Lord and a period of unprecedented kindness from our friends. We have completed the first phase of our new campus here in Colorado Springs, with 80 percent of the land, construction and furnishings already paid for. What a miracle this has been. A large grant from the El Pomar Foundation and specific gifts from many of you made it possible for us to fulfill this dream of a new home in the Rockies. Our board of directors was determined that we would complete this project without incurring a huge debt that would drain our resources for years to come. That goal has been reached, for which we are very grateful.

To be sure, the relocation of the ministry to Colorado Springs two years ago has been a good decision. The prospect of lower operating costs and better stewardship of the funds entrusted to us has been realized. Why then, given this exciting report, is it necessary to convey an unusual need in this letter to our friends? Because we encountered one unexpected setback during the construction project. The ministry took a prudent risk by extending a 24-month promissory note to the developers who purchased our former campus in Pomona, Calif. But because of the declining real estate market, they have been able to resell only part of the property and have defaulted on the note, depriving us of anticipated cash.

We *will* eventually get our money out of the Pomona facility and should not lose a dime in the long run. In fact, we will probably fare even better than if it had already sold, because we will then be entitled to keep the significant down payment. But, for the time being, the inability to get our hands on the remaining funds has run us very short of cash. We have very little money in the bank at this time, which certainly forces us to look heavenward for each day's supply of manna. (That's not a bad posture in which to be, even in good times.)

If you feel led to help us here at the end of the year, we would certainly appreciate your support of our 52 ongoing ministries. But, as usual, when it becomes necessary to express this kind of need, I must emphasize two concerns: First, if you and your family are undergoing financial pressures, this letter is not directed to you. Just say a prayer for Focus on the Family and ask for the Lord's continued blessing on the work He has called us to do. Second, please do not withhold needed funds from your local church. We must not undermine the work of this God-ordained institution. I believe firmly in the concept of "tithing," whereby a tenth or more of one's resources are brought into the "storehouse." That, as it is usually interpreted, refers to the organized church. Nevertheless, we agree with author Ron Blue that there is enough money in Christians' hands to fund the church first and subsequently support worthy para-church ministries. That's the way it ought to be.

Colorado Springs, CO 80995

Regardless of the response to this letter, I want to express my love and appreciation for your support through the years. We would have to close our doors in a matter of weeks without your continued generosity and kindness to us. Most importantly, I know that you are praying for us. I'm told that almost every day—in the mail, on the street, or in the lobby here at Focus. Just today, a man pulled me to one side and whispered, "Never give up, never give up, never, never, never, never give up." He was quoting a statement made by Winston Churchill during World War II, of course, but there was passion in his eyes. I knew exactly what he meant.

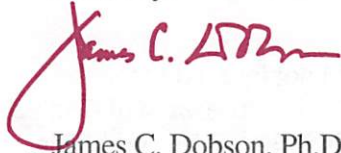
Let me leave you with the words of a letter sent last month by Mrs. Michelle Serlet of Omaha, Neb. She wrote:

Dearest Dr. Dobson and Shirley, we (my husband and I) love you both. In fact, words are hard to express when it comes to telling you how deep our feelings of love and gratitude run. That's why we're sending a hug and a very special prayer, written by Jocelyn, our 8-year-old daughter.

Dear Lord Jesus, you know of all the bad things that have been going on, like aborshons, shooting (killing). I bet that makes you sad, Lord. Even bad things that happen at school like the bad Halloween book that I found in the library. But you must also be happy because people like my dad that goes to aborshon klinik. He goes to pickit at the aborshon klinik to save lives of littel babys. And also peopel like Dr. Dobson is on the radio he does McGee and Me videos and he does Brio (that my sis Danielle gets), kids Clubhouse that me and my sis Rachel used to get. Lord I hope you take care of him. Now I don't think I should be scard because I have my dad, Dr. Dobson and alot of other peopel but expecshelly you, Lord, on my team. Have a good day, Lord. I love u. Your friend, Jocelyn Serlet.¹

With friends like Jocelyn and her parents, this ministry is in wonderful shape. Our network of friends really is like one very large family—and you're part of it. Come by and see our new campus when you can. As promised in the Motel 6 commercial, "We'll leave the light on for you."

Sincerely,



James C. Dobson, Ph.D.
President

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Focus on the Family's *Guidelines for Fund-Raising*

We believe that the way an organization handles its finances is a reflection of its integrity in every arena. Therefore, we have established strict limitations on the way our resources are used. Here are the fund-raising policies I wrote years ago that have governed the ministry:

1. This ministry belongs to God, not to James Dobson. It is neither a monument to my ego nor a legacy to my memory. Focus on the Family does not bear my name . . . the buildings do not belong to me . . . we have not founded a James Dobson University. I am merely a fellow servant in the work of the Kingdom.
2. The Lord has apparently chosen to place His mantle of approval on the ministry of Focus on the Family. Nevertheless, He gives and sometimes takes away. If He ever closes the doors to this work, we will accept His leadings and yield the outcome to Him. Until then, we will devote every ounce of energy to the task at hand.
3. One of the ways we can discern the Lord's will regarding the continuation of our work is through the support He sends (or doesn't send) from His people. Therefore, during lean times we will make our obligations known to our friends—but we will not squirm, scratch or claw for contributions. We will never resort to what we consider to be disrespectful and dishonorable methods of fund-raising, even when the needs are serious.
4. We will ask people not to support Focus on the Family or any other Christian program until their obligations to the local church have been met. It is the first line of defense for the family.
5. We will not operate the ministry at a deficit. Although from time to time it is necessary to borrow funds for large capital expenditures, such as for a new building, we will seek to repay the loans as soon as possible.
6. We consider the contributions we receive to be “blood money”—sent from loving people who have sacrificed to make their gifts possible. Our obligation, therefore, is to spend that money conservatively and wisely in continuing the ministry. We have no limousines or airplanes or condos in Hawaii. Every penny is stretched as far as possible to serve the needs of today's families.
7. We will receipt all donations, showing the fair market value of any materials requested and sent, in order to help contributors determine the tax-deductible portion of their gifts. (The Internal Revenue Code permits donors to deduct the amount they give to Focus on the Family in excess of the value of materials received from the organization.)
8. When we make a purchase, we will pay the invoice within 30 days, if possible. We do not intend to use the vendor's money.
9. We will not try to raise more money than we need.
10. I will not be the primary fund-raiser.
11. My wife, Shirley, and I will accept no salary for this work, and will pay a portion of the radio air time expenses to compensate for the publicity that increases our book sales. When our books are offered to listeners through the ministry, we will waive all royalties to allow Focus to obtain the lowest possible price from the publisher. When we use secretarial or staff assistance for personal reasons, we will compensate the ministry for that intrusion.
12. We will never sell or rent our mailing list to those wishing to use the names and addresses of our supporters. Those individuals wrote to us in good faith, and if they wanted to receive mail from other organizations, I'm sure they would ask for it. We will maintain the tightest security on our list of friends and supporters.
13. We will conform to the standards established by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC)—organizations created to ensure ethical fund-raising and administration practices.

To summarize, we will try to remember always that Jesus Christ is our possessor and our dispossessor. He ordained and blessed this ministry. It belongs entirely to Him.