

2003 Christmas Greetings from the Helgrens

(www.helgren.com)

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(For the “guys” having to read this, here is the short version you can report to your wife: The Helgren’s are alive and well and blessed! You can go back to watching TV now...)

I am hopeful that the Christmas season is still in full swing as you read this. And, I am talking about the REAL Christmas Season. You know, those 12 days that BEGIN on December 25th, not that season that starts just after Halloween and ends on Christmas Eve. Alas, we saw one tree out on the curb on the morning of the 26th...

God has been faithful all year long for us. It was a very blessed 2003 with many interesting twists and turns that only God could plan and execute perfectly. Here is the recap:

I started the year with the launch of a new company, Timpanogos Technologies. This has been a Grace-filled venture for me. I ended last year with no income stream and persisted in that mode, more or less, until March. I finally went on a full salary in July. God took care of the details (bills and such) as He always has. I learned that “Trust the Lord” is more than a platitude. You can bank on it! The business is growing, not yet thriving, and I still have quite a bit of debt to take care of but, I know God will sort out the details. Beyond business I am still a children’s leader in BSF, busy with church council, working on technology projects with Jonas (seems like continuously), fishing with Sam when I get the chance. My life is full.

Deb is still at the Sports Medicine Clinic at the University of Utah. Still doing the same basic job she has done these past 12 years. You know, rather than complain about the “same ‘ol, same ‘ol, we are thankful that God has provided continuous employment for both of us. But, He added a bit adventure to Deb’s life: She is now the Teaching Leader for the Bible Study Fellowship evening women’s class here in Salt Lake. Huge! Weekly lecture. Weekly leader’s meeting. Part time PT and full time TL. The grapevine says she is doing great (I think so, too).

Jonas, well, what can we say? He is driving us...well he’s driving! We survived driving lessons and he is (thankfully) on his own wheels now (The \$100 Oldsmobile...another story). A junior now at Salt Lake Lutheran High, he is busy with soccer and handbell choir. Even followed his old man’s theatrical leanings by participating in his first production in the spring and again this fall. He spent an action-packed summer up at Lutheran Camp Perkins starting as a counselor assistant (go-fer) and ending up being the maintenance “guy”. I knew he was in deep as he explained working with 220 volt feeder lines, getting the refrigeration units running and dropping the gas tank out of a 1979 Dodge van...with no experience in any of the above disciplines. He has the Rakow “handyman” genes. He also spent 10 days on the “left coast” at a Technology Leadership conference in San Jose. New HP Notebook in hand, we got reports from him as he surfed the web wirelessly. A chip off of the “Old Geek”.

Sam is quite the young man in his own right. He will finish this year at Redeemer and will head to Lutheran High in the fall. Sam is a soccer player as well but his true sport is fishing. We did NOT go

ice fishing in January or February (!). However, we did explore the ever-shrinking Lake Powell in the spring (you'd think less water would mean more fish per gallon...not so). Sam and I had a "classic" fishing trip this summer in Alaska. Sam pulled in his first "open water" King Salmon in Metlakatla, Alaska and, after heading up to Anchorage, we spent 5 days living out of the back of a Chevy Blazer on the Kenai Peninsula, fishing, eating, sleeping. We added the Kasilof and the Kenai rivers to our "favorite fishing spot" list for Alaska. We both dream of moving there some day....

What else did we do? No major family trips this year. We miss going to the Lake in Minnesota in the summer and we are now (well, the boys and I are, at least) hot about heading to New Zealand to see the wonderful scenery we caught glimpses of in the "Lord of the Rings" film trilogy. We at least were among the first in Utah to see "Return of the King", staying up to see it open at 12:05 am (and home by 4am). Tolkien fans we are. Trips for me to London November '02 and '03 racked up miles and wanderlust....

We won't wander too far from God's Love though, and we wish that you will experience His love in many and various ways as well. A very Blessed 2004 !