

2010 Christmas Greetings from the Helgrens (www.helgren.com)

December 26, 2010

I always marvel at God's Sovereignty and graciousness as I take a look back at the year. As long as I have been writing these Christmas missives, I am often blown away by how much we are blessed. The earliest letter I can find (1991) reflects just those sentiments. 18 years later, very little has changed (and so much). Rather than reflecting a boring life, it really reflects the faithfulness and constancy of God. So although you may be having a sense of Deja Vu as you read this letter, the phrase "God is good" comes to mind for me.

Family travel is getting fewer and further between as the boys build lives of their own and coordinating schedules becomes more of a challenge. But we were able to get in a few family trips in 2010. The boys and I went up to Anchorage in June and did some fishing. This year, for the first time, Jonas accompanied Sam and I and, for the first time, we caught NO salmon! We DID have a great time and we brought back 60 lbs of halibut. Best Father's Day gift ever!

We managed to finally pull together a Helgren family reunion and ended up in Sheboygan, WI. Having the extended family together was a blast and we had a chance to also see our dear Gramma in Dundee as she approached her 100th birthday. On a more somber note, we also interred Todd's ashes next to Mom and Dad while in Illinois. It was a wonderful, meaningful time to be together as family.

Since we no longer go to Minnesota to the cabin on the lake, we now travel to central Idaho to recreate at Debbie's brothers cabin which is completely off the grid with no phone or electricity. To **this** geek, it is Wonderful! We managed to get away for a few days in September to enjoy the Idaho outdoors and very warm weather.

In November we gathered with the Hein clan in Meridian, ID for Thanksgiving. It was our second consecutive T-day trip since Debbie's Mom had her stroke. Almost the whole Hein clan gathered and we got the added bonus of hosting August and Carla and 4 children (with plenty of snow) just before and after the holiday. Great fun!

As far as the individual members of the Helgren household are concerned, here is the rundown:

Jonas, having amassed a small fortune living at home, decided to become a homeowner himself (*that* will show him!). The process started in May and he finally

closed on December 1st. No wonder the Real Estate market is in such a shambles! But, the December closing meant the the (de)-construction began in earnest just as the holiday season was upon us. Thus explaining the lateness of this letter. "Dear Old Dad Construction Company" has been contracted for remodeling help. We look forward to the house warming party!

Sam is still at the University of Utah, majoring in International Studies (Middle Eastern studies). We are not exactly sure where that will take him but in this "global" economy, it will be useful (we're sure...). Sam has stayed active in the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and has, so far, managed to keep his grades higher than last year (but still too low by mom and dad's estimate). He has, by all accounts, the dream job of a college co-ed: He works in a brewery! So, he is still in school, still in the fraternity and has a job. What else could you ask for ?

Deb continues her work at the U of U Orthopaedic Center. Amazing that the "temporary" job she took nearly 20 years ago is still providing her with challenging work. She also continues her Teaching Leader vocation with Bible Study Fellowship International (BSF) on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, September - May. Add to that teaching toddlers at Sunday School and you have a pretty full "teaching" schedule. I marvel at her patience and deep understanding of God's word. Quite an inspiration to me.

Me? Well, in many ways it is "same 'ol, same 'ol". I have been blessed with a lengthy consulting project in Alaska that has me traveling a couple of times a month. And, in late August a full time job opportunity morphed into an additional consulting gig right here in Utah (in Clearfield, about 40 miles north of here). So, I have some additional work that I am thankful for. I also have my vocation of Teaching Leader to add depth and meaning to my life and I get to spend Saturday mornings and Monday evenings teaching Isaiah to some pretty wonderful men.

This has been a very blessed year in our household and I pray that the peace of God pervade your life and bring you great joy in the coming year!