



"Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called the children of God" 1 JOHN. 3:1

Dear Ones:

I've spent days trying to collect my thoughts for this letter, and I realize that this year has passed so quickly, I'm not really sure what all went on! Whatever it was, I know it involved endless hours of chauffeuring, tons of laundry, 24 hour baby bouncing, toddler training, child caring, pre-teen pampering, teenage tolerating and big hubby hugging (the latter of which makes all the former worthwhile.) I recall a year of financial frustration; everytime I'd think I had my budget under control, someone would sneak in the kitchen and eat another \$300 worth of food. Even though I sat the children down and explained that it would greatly benefit the household budget if they wouldn't grow out of their clothes this year, they all went out and grew anyway! I remember momentous decisions such as the day I declared I would henceforth greet the world "au natural". I threw out my Clairol; now the whole world knows what my hairdresser has only suspected for years! I've faced times of panic when I realized that in some areas I'm unequipped to aid in any homework past the 6th grade, but also times of supreme confidence ... the kind that overtakes a mother when she discovers that she has indeed successfully potty trained a 2 year old. Now that I look at it, I guess it's business as usual for the mother of this home who considers it both blessing and great joy to be in the midst of it all.

As usual, visits from loved ones are always the highlights of the year. This year, we were blessed with several. Paul's parents were with us for a week in March. Both of our sisters and their families came along in July, and my parents for a week in October. We have one complaint regarding all those visits -- they were too short! Friend, Louise Ahrens, came from California for a week in May. Two months later, her husband, Darrell, roared into Rickenbacker AFB in Columbus and spent a weekend with us. Paul and Eric went to meet Darrell, and Eric filled a portion of his fondest dreams by being photographed sitting in the cockpit of Darrell's F-4. (He still dreams of flying an F-4; of course, he'd fly the more capable Navy version.)



Our children, like yours, have delighted us in another year of growth. Eric was 15 in August, and has since reached his goal of 6'1". He recently announced that he's finally "caught on" to this school business. (This is good news to hear from a sophomore in high school!) Eric has a keen sense of humor and easy rapport with people of all ages. He's interested in aviation and thinks he might pursue a career as a mission pilot. Amy, 13, has developed a "green thumb" (goes well with sparkly brown eyes, pink cheeks and freckles, ho ho) and is constantly rescuing my floundering floribunda from the fate of the compost heap. Amy (along with Eric) sings with the Academy senior choir, works with an evangelistic deaf singing group and is becoming downright melodious at the piano. This child is blessed with a nature of unfailing good cheer and has a love for school that her brothers term "unnatural"! Damon, 12, happily survived his first year of football (if you can call multiple scrapes, bumps, bruises and occasional bodily disarray survival!) He thoroughly enjoys drama club, sings with the Academy junior choir and recently advanced from junior band to 3rd trumpet in the senior band. When we asked him what 3rd trumpet meant, he replied that when the music gets very fast or has lots of high notes, 3rd trumpets don't play. Damon's great loves are health and science and he aspires to be either a doctor or a member of a clown troupe that performs for hospitals! (h-mmmmm) Rebecca and Susan, 3 and 2 respectively, are all too rapidly growing out of babyhood. (The older three see this too and have begun to drop hints about having another baby. I say if they can find me an infant who is potty trained, obedient, loves vegetables, sleeps in 'til 8:00 a.m. and is financially independent, I'm all for it!) Even though I sometimes tire of being so housebound, I couldn't have two sweeter, funnier or more interesting little companions.... helpful too.... Have you ever had your bathroom carpet damp mopped with Ajax ... or your dog bathed in honey and Rice Krispies? Did you know what a spin through the wash cycle will do for a philodendron, or what a treat it is for your pet to be fed chocolate meringue pie with a spoon? I bet Heloise never knew that a jar of Noxema, rubbed into a table top, will provide an interesting patina, guaranteed to outlast the furniture itself. (No wonder this year has passed so quickly ... time really does fly when you're havin' fun.)

The shepherd of our little flock is fine and continues happily in his work at the Finance Center. He recently requested, and was granted, a year's extension here in Cleveland, which is glad news for us all. The Navy powers that be put out a "no no" on beards this year and so our bearded wonder is clean shaven (almost - still has his mustache) for the first time in 7 years. After a day or two of "aws" and "guffaws," the children adjusted easily, but I was a bit slower to come around. It was a full week before I'd let him come to bed without first showing me his I.D. Paul, at first, felt like a shorn lamb and wanted to hide his face. But it wasn't long before I heard him telling the bathroom mirror he'd forgotten what a handsome face had been under all that hair. ho, ho.

As a family, we've learned much this year. The most important is we learned that "life apart from God wasn't meant to work," and we are daily seeking to give more of ourselves to our dear Lord, who daily gives us all. We've discovered that praying together goes a long way toward family unity and harmony, and that the Good Book carries in it the perfect guidance for any dilemma any of us will ever face. After the Bible, our "favorite books of the year award" goes to Mel Tari's Like A Mighty Wind and The Gentle Breeze of Jesus. How it encourages us to read these accounts of the gathering and moving of God's Holy Spirit in the world today.

Another spiritual blessing we received this year was the opportunity to attend a Bill Gothard Family Life Seminar in September. This week long seminar is held annually in major cities all over the U.S. We are still being blessed and experiencing growth in all areas of our lives from the anointing of those teachings. We will happily send you a seminar schedule for 1982.

So it goes with us Adalgrens at the close of 1981. In light of this Christmas season, we've thought much about gifts this year. The material gifts we are able to give are so limited ... It occurs to us that we should focus upon receiving...receiving the most prized, most costly gift ever offered to man and yet offered freely. Of course, I speak of God's gift to mankind through his Son, Jesus. It is our prayer that you, dear hearts, would seek to receive anew or even for the first time, the fullness of God's most wonderful gift to us all. I'll close this letter with a small song of praise and thanksgiving for the light the Lord continues to provide to lead us through a quickly dimming world. (You may provide the melody of your choice ♪)

The Son is rising in my heart;  
The dark is falling from my soul.  
The light of Jesus has overcome me.  
Halleluia, Lord, I am whole!

We love you always and wish  
you a celebration of the  
peace and joy of the Lord  
Jesus Christ,

Paul, Janet, Eric, Amy, Damon  
Rebecca, Susan