

Merry Christmas!!!!

Dear family and friends,

December 19, 2009

I do hope you're enjoying the holiday season. Just thought I'd give you a quick update on our family. (Or you can just look at the pictures if you want...this letter is just as much for me and my family as it is for you so we can remember what happened all year!)



Karis (18) graduated from high school this spring, our first homeschool graduate and we're so proud of her. She's taking her freshman college classes online from Liberty University in Virginia, and plans to go there next fall as a sophomore. She's also working part-time here in Peru as an assistant to a Mary Kay director. She loves her new MacBook and is turning out to be a great writer just like her Dad. She's a Dekkie (Ted Decker fan) and loved going to "The Gathering" this summer in Tennessee to meet with her other awesome Dekkie friends. You can keep up with her on her blog at: www.elyonscircle.com/blogs/SapphiraAdi

Lucas (17) is a senior this year and is also taking some college classes in music at Illinois Valley Community College just across the river from our house. He's acquired a strong desire to learn music and has already mastered drums and guitar, started learning the accordion, and is working hard now on piano and voice. He led us in some great times of worship for a group that we took to Israel this fall. He's also learned to juggle and ride the unicycle, and is trying to do both at the same time. So if a career in music doesn't work out, he can always join the circus.



Makari (15) started driving this fall with her permit, having learned the basics this summer at the farm in Chenoa with her sister and off-road driving instructor, Karis. Makari loves to sing and has started taking voice lessons. She wants to be like Salena Gomez, or Hannah Montana, or Makari Elder! She also loves to read (and is a Dekkie, too, joining us at The Gathering this summer), and loves her dog, Bell (7). Makari's a blessing to us and to everyone she meets.

Josiah (11) came with us to Israel this summer and was baptized in the Jordan River. He loves to learn and he asks questions about everything. Right now he and his brother Lucas have taken it upon themselves to try to learn the Trachtenberg speed math method. Josiah also plays piano well and just started taking drum and guitar lessons from Lucas. He's a master at memorizing Bible verses, and he's a big reader, most recently finishing "Percy Jackson & The Olympians."



Bo (9) loves animals...especially pigs! Bo recently started a game of hide and seek with me after breakfast each day. He hides until I find him and then he has to start school. I agreed to this game until it took me a good 40 minutes to find him one morning! Now we play AFTER school. He has a kind heart and is just an all around great kid. He is an avid reader currently reading the "Lightning Thief." He enjoys playing the piano, playing games, rollerblading, and is quick at memorizing Bible verses. He is also starting guitar lessons with Lucas.



Kaleo (6) loves dresses and dressing up. She and Makari were even going to dress up in their “princess” dresses this week just to watch a DVD with the family. Here’s a picture of her in her Christmas dress, which she wore to see the Nutcracker Ballet in Bloomington. She started taking dance class this fall and loves it. Kaleo also loves cooking and can’t wait for her “cook night” each week when she gets to pick the menu. She’s superfast at memorizing her Bible verses for AWANA, and keeps up great at her first grade work.



Eric continues doing his Internet ministry at theranch.org, plus writing books and speaking at conferences from time to time. He and I led a group to Israel this October and were blessed to have Karis, Lucas, Makari and Josiah come along with us. Eric’s Dad passed away February 19th, and his Dad’s friend, Mary Lou, passed away September 26th. Both of them were like parents to me as well as to Eric. We already miss them so much, but are so thankful that they’re finally at Home and in peace.



I’m still homeschooling the kids, with Eric’s help, and taking care of my Mom and Dad, who are both living with us now. A few weeks ago, Eric and I went to a dance at the University of Illinois where we met back in 1984. The logo on the wall at the alumni association said, “Building Relationships For Life.” I guess they’re right! We’ve been married for 20 years this year. We had a great trip to Florida in April to celebrate and made a party of it with our family by swimming at the beach, visiting relatives, eating at the Japanese Teppan Edo restaurant at Epcot, and touring Cape Canaveral with Eric’s brother, Craig, who was working on NASA’s launch to the moon this year where they discovered water in one of the craters.



Our trip to Israel was a good reminder of why we celebrate this season more than any other, the coming to earth of our Savior Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, “And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” We’re so thankful that He did, and we’re thankful to have you as our family and friends.



So Merry Christmas, again, from all of us here (Bell, too!), and may God bless you abundantly in the coming year!

Love,
Lana, for the family

