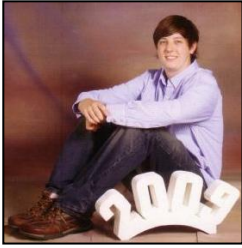


Gordon Christmas Letter 2008

Normally to begin my letter, I say that I can't believe its Christmas already. This time, it's been a long year and Christmas is well overdue! During this time of year I get to connect with friends and family that I haven't heard from in quite a while. Honestly, some of that is changing. For a period of time this year, I



was teaching a Twenty-Something Singles Class at Westwood. They thought it would be great to have a **facebook** page for the class, so as part of that I joined the 21st century as well. Shortly after that, I started getting friend requests from many of you. It was a great opportunity to find old friends, even those with whom I'd totally lost contact, like people I marched with in high school and college. I told Liz about some mutual college friends and gave her my id and password. Then, shockingly, I soon got a friend request from my own wife! **Go Liz!** Now she and I are both in the current century.

Just like the last 14 Christmas letters, we're still in Alabaster and I'm still at **Westwood** Baptist Church in October. I serve as Pastor of Small Groups and oversee Sunday School, Home Groups, Discipleship & Support Groups, supervise the full-time age group staff members, and a few other odds & ends.

Next year at this time, I look forward to telling you about our family trip to **Hawaii**. We earn air miles using the American Airlines credit card for groceries, car repairs, etc. It's exciting because otherwise, we'd never be able to do some of the trips we do. Andy chose the location as his senior trip. He has a goal of visiting all 50 states. Between mission trips and other family trips, he needs only Hawaii, Alaska, Washing & Oregon to go. The four of us will make the trip for a week following his graduation in May.

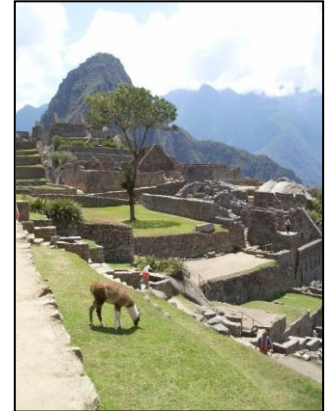
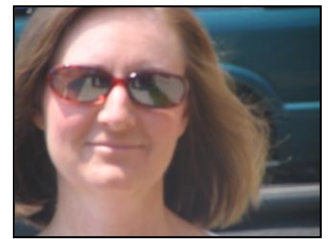
We did our annual family trip to Gulf Shores again, this year with DJ and Morgan along (friends of Andy & Emily). But the real travel experience this year (for all but Andy) was our trip to **Macchu Piccu** in Peru. It was my fourth trip to Peru and I've wanted to go every time. Since we were very close this year, we added a day to the trip and made it happen. It was breath-taking, not only from the thin air, but from the views and history as well. The Spanish never found or conquered this hidden treasure. Check out a funny video from there by clicking on Videos at GordonPlace.com, our family web site. We ended up adding another day and many adventures because Hurrican Ike hit Houston the same weekend we were to come through on the way home. We ended up in Panama and Washington, DC instead.

Emily and I got to visit **New York City** in August. She had been asking to go to New York and with my goal of seeing all the Major League ballparks, I really needed to see Yankee Stadium before they tore it down. She was excited to see **Phantom of the Opera** and to sit by Taylor Hick's grandmom in the Broadway musical **Grease**.

Andy completed his **Eagle Scout** work prior to his 18th birthday in September and will be awarded his Eagle badge on December 15. His Eagle project included a makeover of a green house at a church-owned conference center here in Alabaster. He also voted for the first time this year, bought a motorcycle, worked at O'Charley's for a while before returning to Publix, and also is Sales Rep for Blutek Helmets, an innovative, bluetooth-enabled motorcycle helmet. Pictured at a wedding I did this year are Andy and his girl-friend, Riley, along with Emily.

Emily still has her punk haircut, but is becoming a beautiful young lady inside and out. Where have my children gone? Most people hate that their kids grow up, but I'm actually enjoying it. Life seems so much less stressful now that they are older. I'm also proud of who they are becoming. I hear great things about them from others, and that always brings a parent joy. Emily is singing in a Christian band now and looks forward to getting her first guitar for Christmas. She is also actively involved in the church's student ministry and drama team. She swam competitively this summer as well.

Liz is still leading mission trips through e3 Partners, and interdenominational missions organization based in Dallas that trains and leads church mission teams from the US to 25 countries. In Cusco this year, it was awesome yet again to see God work in the lives of people as we did door-to-door evangelism, home group meetings with new believers, and got to be a part of planting new churches. She is excited to have a new desk where she can organize her work. This year we set up a great web site for her ministry. Please see it at **GoE3.net**. While you are visiting, sign up to go with her on one of the trips. It will be a life-changing adventure that you won't regret. Liz also still does some pet sitting, which is a good thing as her missions support is down with the economy.



Oh, I can't close this letter without saying "Roll Tide!". Tomorrow is the game against Florida, but regardless of the outcome, it has been a great 12-0 year.

Sending Christmas cards & letters is one of my favorite Christmas traditions. So many of you have been a big part of our lives and mean much to us. Even though I might not get to spend time with you through out the year, I want to do a letter to stay in your life in some way. Please remember us in your prayers as well. We'd love to hear from you as well, so please stay in touch.

May the joy of knowing Christ be yours this Christmas season!

Jay, Liz, Andy & Emily

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:9-10

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I began the year with a **Disaster Relief** trip to Missouri where a snow & ice storm had devastated Jefferson City. There was a beautiful blanket of snow there. Knowing Emily would be jealous, I packed a cooler with snow to bring back to her. She made a snow man for our front porch and we enjoyed him only a few days. While cleaning out the garage recently, I finally moved our sled to the back of the attic and told Emily, "Next time it snows enough to use this, just bring your kids over and we'll get it out."

