

Gordon Christmas Letter 2010



The Gordon family didn't see a lot of big things this year, but lots of smaller notables. For one, Liz and I celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary. Our anniversary celebration involved a trip to one of our favorites from the past, New England in the fall. During the trip I was able to see a couple of major league baseball games. Doing so in all 30 major league cities is on my bucket list. (I'm two thirds done!) We mainly skirted the coastline visiting historic sites, cities, harbors and houses from Connecticut to Maine. Then we turned inland through New Hampshire and Vermont to see the colorful leaves. My favorite part was the Schoodic Peninsula in Maine. Large waves were crashing against the rocky coastline and the majesty of God's creation was on full display.



While in a small Maine town, Liz noticed a big, dead moose in the bed of a pickup truck in front of us. We followed as the driver turned in a drive and parked his truck. He was on the way to show a buddy all 780 pounds of his prize. "Excuse me," Jay said, "I'm a tourist and don't see this every day. May I take a picture of your moose?" He told me the whole story with his thick New England accent... "It was "200 YAHDS away when I shot it."



I've been on staff at Westwood Baptist Church for 16 years now. My responsibilities include overseeing adult small groups, both on and off campus, as well as women's ministry, men's ministry and discipleship. Liz and I are still involved in a Home Group through the church and love it. The time spent with our friends in our group is great. For those who don't know, a home group is like Sunday School on steroids. Every part of it is more and better.

Besides pet sitting, Liz is on staff with E3 Partners, leading mission trips to South America. Ecuador is her focus country. This summer she did two E3 trips to Ecuador (Cuenca and Ambato) and one church trip to Mexico where she worked with Charlie and Robin Janney who are planting churches there. Robin uses craft-making to reach the women there in Aguascalientes. I went on the trip to Cuenca and enjoyed playing soccer and American football with the people.



Amy Lawrence of ESPN Radio participated in one of Liz's trips to Ecuador. Andy got to work with her on the soccer team and they remain in contact. Liz and I got to stop by for a visit on our New England trip and Amy gave us a tour of the ESPN Studios in Bristol, Connecticut. Being a big sports fan, I really enjoyed seeing all the studios, sets and props. It's a really big place with millions of miles of wires!



Back in the spring I went shooting with a friend. Jim had a 50 caliber handgun which is the largest handgun made. He offered to let me shoot a cylinder, but the shells cost \$3.00 each, so I only fired twice. I felt like Dirty Harry and wanted to say "Go ahead. Make my day!"



Andy spent six weeks in Ecuador doing missions this summer. He had lots of great experiences, made lots of new friends, and saw God work in some great ways in and through his life. He transferred to the University of Alabama this fall after attending Jeff State Community College his first year. He is majoring in Mechanical Engineering, doing well, and is a part of the International Honors Program. He is planning to do one semester of study abroad and learn a foreign language as part of that program.

Emily is counting the days until she gets her driver's license. As of today we're at 14 days and counting. In November she got the opportunity to begin leading worship at a new church in Helena, Hope Church. Emily enjoys that and we hear she does a great job. She has been learning to play guitar over the last couple of years. She is a sophomore at Evangel Classical Christian School, and does drama at church.



Sending Christmas cards & letters is one of our favorite Christmas traditions. You are among friends who have been a big part of our lives and you mean much to us. Even though we might not get to spend time with you throughout the year, we value your friendship! 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!

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

Jay, Liz, Andy & Emily

2010 Extra Content...

It all wouldn't fit, so the electronic version has more. This is stuff that I wrote, then had to delete to get it down to one page.

It seems like yesterday that Liz and I walked the aisle, then before honeymooning in Savannah and Jekyll Island, Georgia. We didn't know back then that we were supposed to go to some exotic, Caribbean Island. Of course we married just six weeks after Liz had returned from Venezuela (in essence Caribbean) as a Journeyman missionary.

This year we lost a great friend in Kenneth Narrell. Kenneth and Gene's daughter, Terri, was a youth in back in the days I served Danville Baptist Church as Minister of Music and Youth. They all became precious friends and even went with us to help us move to Ft. Worth, Texas when we moved to Southwestern Seminary. Kenneth and I enjoyed baseball together, both the Atlanta Braves and Nintendo.

It was also a year that I reconnected with the family of Janet Prater in Georgia. Janet was a close friend to both Liz and me when we were at Jacksonville State University. There I led a vocal ensemble at the Baptist Campus Ministry. Janet sang also in the group. For posterity, I made a tape of the testimonies and songs of the group just before we broke for the summer. Janet passed away during that summer. I was able to burn a CD for her family and it was a meaningful time.

As you are aware, our favorite thing to do is travel. In December, 2009 last year we visited Liz's brother and his wife in San Diego. While there we visited Joshua Tree National Park, San Juan Capistrano, the Milibu Pier, The Farmers Market and the Walk of Stars in Hollywood. The SEC Championship Game took place while we were at Liz's brother's house, so we enjoyed it there. I also visited North Coast Church which has helped form some of my philosophy of small group ministry.

In January 2010, we traveled to central Florida for Dale's 50th Birthday Celebration at his church. We were a surprise guest. It was good to catch up. There I also visited Northland Church which does a number of multi sites.

Emily and I had a summer weekend trip to the lake with Bruce and his family. We got to do some tubing behind his boat. He has now sold the lake house, so as of Thanksgiving 2010, it's gone.

Tom Smitherman finished building his Tug Boat this year. I helped him test it out on Lay Lake.

That's all for now!

Jay

