

Gordon Christmas Letter 2011



Roll Tide! Despite the concern of many, I'm more of an Alabama fan than ever!



The last few Christmas letters revealed little change for the Gordon family. This year we decided to mix it up a bit and move to Arkansas! As God was leading in this direction, I (Jay) was kicking and screaming. Alabama was pretty comfortable and family and friends were there. I had served Westwood Baptist Church for almost 17 years. During that time we had grown close to so many people at Westwood, particularly our Home Group. With the picture of Jonah in mind, and desiring to avoid a similar fate, we moved this fall.

God's plan is perfect and we're excited to be in the middle of His will. In September I began serving as Executive Pastor of Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock. The main tasks involved with that role include working with the Senior Pastor to oversee the entire ministry, staff and finances of the church. I was the final piece of an entirely new staff here over the last 3-4 years. They are a great group of folks and fun to work with. Most of the former staff retired after long tenures here.

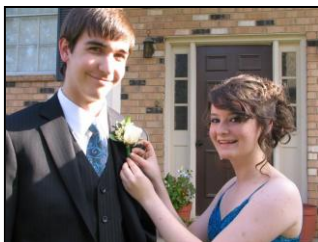
My first Sunday here followed the Alabama-Arkansas game. I kept quiet the entire morning, until at a newcomer's lunch the pastor's wife asked me why Alabama "didn't know who they were" and had two mascots. I told her, "I didn't know about the elephant, but hog's blood is what makes the tide crimson."

Andy is enrolled at Alabama, but as part of a Mechanical Engineering Co-op is working this fall semester at a Tiffin Motor Home Plant in Red Bay, Alabama. He will be returning to Tuscaloosa by Christmas. It

was difficult for us to move further from Andy, but it is comforting to know he has friends and a church family there at Capstone Church in case there is some crisis (that we parents create in our heads).

In July my mom passed away. Although it was difficult to let her go, she had been suffering from Parkinson's Disease for a number of years and was ready. In some ways I felt more freedom to move after she passed. I am so thankful for both her and my dad and their investment in my life.

The tornados that swept through in late April impacted us all in some way. Andy was in school at Tuscaloosa. On the afternoon of April 27, I answered a call from Liz. Her distressed and tearful voice simply reported, "I'm watching a tornado rip through Tuscaloosa on live TV and I can't reach Andy." I headed home, avoiding the urge to drive to Tuscaloosa with my disaster relief credentials. We were able to reach him about an hour after the disaster. The tornado's path was just a few hundred yards from his apartment. In the following weeks, all four of us had the opportunity to work in disaster relief. Pictured with Westwood's disaster relief trailer are Liz (center), Robin Bird and Barry Gladstone.



Emily is driving now. She gains the approval of her male school mates by driving a red pickup truck. She is a junior at Evangel Classical Christian School. Now that we're in Arkansas, she'll be homeschooling, but following the same curriculum as Evangel. The plan is for her to return for her final semester in Spring 2013 and to graduate with her class.

This summer Emily returned to Mexico for an extended stay to work with missionaries Charlie & Robin Janney in Aguas Calientes. She assisted Robin with a craft ministry, led a youth Bible study and working with children during some of the adult Bible studies. She is pictured here with prom date Jonathan Horton.

Liz did some trips to Ecuador this summer as part of her work as a missionary with E3 Partners. The trips were to Macas and Ibarra with members from Westwood, Calera, Sunrise and Moulton Baptist Churches. It is exciting to see God work on those trips which involve winning people to Christ and planting churches, beginning with a small home 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

2011 Extra Content

Trip to Orlando in June
(Larry & Chris)

TG in Alabama

Liz gave away business

20/30 parks: Houston