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Dearest Friends!

What a privilege it is to catch up with one another at the end of each year. We enjoy reading updates from family and friends far and wide. When you read someone else's story, your own is always put in a fresh perspective!

Each of our family members has had 'new chapters' in their lives this year, and as we reflect upon the last year, we are grateful to God for His many incredible provisions.

Andrea will tell her own story separately, but from my side, what a blessing it has been to have her on South African soil for the last 6 months! She and I have spent precious times walking together early morning every day, and she has even joined me in my Dragon Boat Paddling twice a week. The Breast Cancer Survivor Team, I paddle with, have adopted her on to our Boat, and have kept up to date on all the details leading up to the wedding.

Daniela has been extremely busy this year with her Art work. She has had many exams and practicals and her water colour work has gone from strength to strength. In October she participated in the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) Annual Student Convention. This conference takes place once a year, and this year there were just under 2 000 ACE students from all over South Africa. Each student had a choice of categories to enter for competition. These were judged and prizes were awarded. Daniela entered as part of the home school choir, photography and the art category. She placed 6th place in the surreal art category. Daniela continues to ice-skate as part of the Senior Synchronized Skating Team. They are training for

'Worlds'. For the year-end Charity Gala, she won a Silver placing for her solo performance.

Christopher has just completed his first full year of formal schooling. This has involved several adjustments, most notably going from an American-based home school program to an English system.

So for the first time he did year-end exams which span the work of the whole year. We are grateful to the Lord for the experiences He gives us, and while this has not been an easy adjustment, it has been a worthwhile one. Christopher has done well medically and his monthly Renal Check-ups have been fairly uneventful. On December the 2nd, we celebrated the second anniversary of his kidney transplant. The Doctors are happy that his graft kidney has settled in well and while we would have hoped for better overall function, Christopher's health is remarkably sound as he has managed to climb mountains this year. In school sports he has played cricket and hockey and has also participated in canoeing. As a family we have continued to take advantage of many mountain hikes in our beautiful city. In karate he has had several successful competitions and has won Gold for several events, including at Provincials. His unison Team won Gold for Nationals, which means they have been invited to participate at the World Tournament 2012 in the USA. The intense squad training begins now, and we pray that he will have the strength and the stamina to put in the many hours needed in preparation for this event. In November Christopher adopted an energetic kitten and named her Olivia.

Calvin started his journey of formal schooling this year in May. He too, has had a lot of adjusting to do in the transition from an American-based home school program to an English formal class room system. The standard at the independent school the boys attend is very high, but the classes are small and nurturing. We are so grateful to live in such close proximity to a good school. Friday nights continue to be dominated by Scouts, and he looks forward to his annual Troop Camp this December. Calvin continues in karate and has earned his second brown belt. School sports included field hockey and water polo. These have been brand new experiences for him. It has been the first time he has participated in Team sports like this and that has been a great adventure. For fencing, Calvin won the gold medal at Nationals this year in Epee. This particular competition was his first formal entry into competitive fencing, and against expectations, he worked his way up to the quarter finals and into the finals. For the final round he lagged behind for a long time, only to rally and win Gold! A few years ago Calvin had been given a flute by Ashley, and so he took his first flute lessons this year and did very well at the year-end concert. Calvin continues to love History and grows in his skill of oratory presentation. Calvin joined Peter on a Mission to Mpumalanga and KwaZulu earlier this year. This was Calvin's 11th Mission with Dad, and, as before, he proved an invaluable member of the team, assisting in Way of the Master and Evangelism Explosion training and Scripture presentations. They were very blessed to be able to fit in five hours at the Kruger National Park, where they saw elephant, rhino, eagles, a wide variety of antelope, vervet monkeys, owls and bats and a leopard very close by, in a tree.

My dear mother celebrated her 80th Birthday this year. I was able to fly to Arizona (on Dad's frequent flyer miles) to visit Mom and Dad. It was a special time for a number of reasons, especially as it was the first time I had seen my parents since the Kidney transplant and since my Cancer operation and the Chemotherapy. There was so much to catch up on, on so many levels. Tammy Combs – my soon to be in-laws – hosted a beautiful Birthday Tea for Mom, with the able help of Jan Gilbert and Susan Parks. It was a reunion as well, in that we were able to fellowship and celebrate with friends we have not seen in many years. During my visit of course I had a chance to get to know Hunter, and spent many hours in good fellowship with Andrea. President George Bush was the speaker for the 50th anniversary of Arizona Christian University and Andrea sang in the combined choir for this occasion. So we enjoyed not only witnessing Andrea sing, but also relished hearing the President speak.

In the course of my visit I managed to link up with the newly formed Breast Cancer Survivor Team and participated in a Dragon Boat Festival. This was a momentous occasion in that there were over 50 Teams participating, 7 of which were all made up of BC survivors. What an experience that was! My stay with Mom and Dad this year will linger in my memory for a very long time. Our fellowship was rich and our many walks down memory lane were precious. God has blessed me indeed with wonderful parents. Mom and Dad celebrate 60 years of marriage and ministry this year. Peter of course held the Fort here, and very ably took care of sports, school, meals and the multitude of other things happening... in addition to his own responsibilities of course! Peter's sister Vanessa came down to Cape Town to help out around the home while I was in Arizona.

All of our children have been involved in several aspects of our ministry again this year. It was lovely to have Andrea participate in our camps, courses and outreaches, travel with Peter, the Women's Day outreaches and the Life Chain in October. She has also been involved with our radio ministry and her involvement at the Mission has been very helpful to Peter. Her portfolio grows more impressive each year! For our Thanksgiving celebrations with our Mission Staff, each of our children gave thanks for the privilege of being involved with our ministry and it blessed Peter and I to hear our children's love for the Lord expressed so eloquently.

My own health has been good this year. I am still in remission and am on a five year course of Tamoxiphen. My chemotherapy ended in January, and it was made that much easier for me because I had my dear sister Debbie visiting for Christmas. She held my hand during my infusions and made sure my family had fabulous meals during her stay. Christopher frequently asks when Auntie Debbie is coming to cook for us again! I do not have the stamina I used to, but try to maintain my health by exercise and good supplements. Peter has had a few health issues this year, but we hope with time to solve them all. Peter

lectured at a University in Zambia and at the Africa School of Missions. He has written and published five books this year, including: a third edition of Slavery Terrorism and Islam; Practical Discipleship, Discipleship Training Manual; Answering Skeptics and (funds allowing, soon to be published), Victorious Christians.

Peter continues to be the solid rock and glue of our family, and keeps us all focused when emotions run high. Our home is a hive of activity at any given time of the day, but we try never to sacrifice our time together over the dinner table. We were blessed by a visit from our good friends the Rice family. They had been missionaries in South Africa for nine years. Heather, Rebecca and Katie helped make Andrea's wedding shower a huge success, and we all really appreciated good fellowship over meals and outings.

The new chapter for our family in general of course is the fact that we have added a fiancé/son-in-law in Hunter Combs to our family! What a blessing it has been to have him here in the Southern Hemisphere involved in ministry with us. While Andrea and Hunter are young, we are certain that the time is right for them to be joined in marriage. They plan to both return to the US, so that Andrea can finish her degree in Journalism as she is still on a full scholarship there. Their intention is to return to Africa in full-time Missions, which will make Andrea a third generation Missionary.

As with every other year, through health trials and other tribulations, we give thanks to God our Father for blessing us in such numerous ways. We are grateful to be in ministry, grateful for family and grateful for you, our prayer partners and supporters. We are especially grateful to my parents, Bill and Harriett Bathman, for being our mentors, guides, counsellors, best friends and supporters. Without them, our work here would be much lonelier and considerably harder. I grieve often over the fact that we are not on the same Continent, but trust God's sovereign plan regarding this. Mom and Dad have been our closest allies in all of our endeavours and we praise Him for this, one of His many 'all things'.

May our Heavenly Father be your source of joy and strength as well, as you wind down your year. May He be your focus as you celebrate His Incarnation at this time. Thank you for standing with us in so many ways, but most importantly for your consistent prayers and fellowship.

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