

“It was like wedding preparations all over again...”

After weeks of going through lists and sending invitations, working on the programs and photo boards, arranging for choir rehearsals (Winnie sang, Gilbert watched Josiah), we worried not about rain but that the weather for the Adeney House dedication would be a scorcher. But the August weather was temperate enough for the outdoor guests to enjoy the chance to participate in the dedication of the building project at our church.

If that wasn't enough to bring back memories of '93, we celebrated our fifth wedding anniversary by attending the dinner dance celebrating the 100th year of the Bechtel corporation. Not only was it the first time Gilbert wore a tuxedo since the wedding, but the event was held at the same hotel where we spent our first night after the wedding.

More “firsts.” We went to one of Gilbert's company picnics. At Ardenwood Historical Park, Josiah discovered popcorn and received a small stuffed cow that is one of his regular bed and travel companions.

In September, we visited Yosemite Park and Mono Lake for the first time as a family. Gilbert got sore shoulders carrying Josiah in a backpack to Vernal



Josiah and Joe Cool ride in style while in Yosemite

Falls; fortunately for Daddy, Josiah was able to walk much of the way back. Doing overnight backpacking with heavy camping gear is probably not in our future.

We didn't need to go anywhere for earth-shaking news. An earthquake measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale jolted us awake early one morning in December. Its epicenter was El Cerrito—it felt as if it were right under us! The same week, a neighboring city experienced a tiny tornado.

When Josiah first began talking at about his second birthday, one of his first words was “backhoe.” Now he can say “Safeway Club Card” and “Laughing Cow cheese.” When unhappy, like the time Mommy was away overnight, Josiah thinks about trucks to comfort himself (eating fruit is the next-best remedy).

If he sang, he'd likely sing this to the tune of “My Favorite Things” from *The Sound of Music*:

*Peterbilt, Kenworth and Ford, Mack and Volvo
Bobcat and backhoe and dump truck and load-o
Graders and rollers and paving machines
These are a few of my favorite things
Fire trucks, tow trucks and p-cars and ambies*
School bus and big trucks I wear on my jammies**
Striped concrete mixers and big tower keens**
These are a few of my favorite things
When I can't sleep, when I can't breathe
When I'm feeling sad
I simply recite all my fav'rite machines
And then I don't feel so bad.*

**(police cars and ambulances)*

*** (cranes)*

One day after he had learned the word “more”, we to get him to request more food with the word “please” added. Mom asked, “What's the magic word?” Josiah thought for a moment, then answered brightly, “truck!” He carries a few small cars or trucks from his collection most everywhere he goes. Now he's wild about big rigs.

Josiah is thankful for living near construction projects this year, especially Solano Avenue and the new Albany Middle School. Everyone enjoys lap-reading times. Josiah's current favorites are *Curious George* and *Dr. Seuss* stories, and *Truck Song*, by Diane Siebert and Byron Barton.

Winnie enjoys regular stroller-walks with “the little guy.” Occasionally they go to Costco, 4 miles roundtrip. Josiah is a good traveler, using stroller and car trips as either a nap time or a chance to look for big machines/trucks.

In the Fall, the Mom’s Group began going through Stephen Covey’s *7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*. It’s a book that could take years, even a lifetime, to fully implement, but quite worthwhile. Covey’s main point is that if family is really most important in our lives, it’ll reflect in the unconditional love and commitment we have for one another. It means working hard to build healthy relationships and achieve the family’s goals.

Winnie was privileged to co-lead a confirmation class for the Junior High students at church. What a great way to refresh what one believes about the Christian faith and to impart those truths to the next generation!

The week before Christmas, we took a family trip to Houston because Gilbert was considering transferring to Bechtel’s office there. A decline in work in the San Francisco office led to the elimination of his department here. We also managed to visit several friends and the Space Center in Houston.

In the end, Gilbert decided to take an assignment with a Bechtel project office in Richland, Washington, where he expects to have more responsibility at work than before. Please remember us in prayer. The added travel and separation time will be a strain on all three of us.



Gilbert and Winnie take Josiah and some of his four- and eighteen-wheeled friends for a break while in Houston

Gilbert will go to Richland and pave the way in January. Later, the rest of the family will move there. In-between time, Gilbert will come home for visits. Also, Winnie wants to take the opportunity to take Josiah for his first Amtrak ride (to Portland, OR, where Gilbert would drive and pick them up). We hope to get good renters for our home in El Cerrito. We may not get our new address out to all of you but those with e-mail can probably count on being able to contact us at gwchan@hotmail.com.

Although moving is always a disruption, we are thankful it happens after the end of Gilbert’s term as board chair at Berkeley Covenant Church and after the building project is virtually complete. There were numerous activities besides construction, but some of the memorable events included getting the church to celebrate holidays more to Gilbert’s liking: football games on New Year’s Day and Thanksgiving Day and a soccer game on Memorial Day. There was also a softball game with the Boy Scout troop that meets at the church. We hope this continues as a possible avenue for outreach to friends and community.

For Christmas, we and some church friends sang Christmas carols on our block on an unusually cold evening. At one house, the residents turned off the lights while we sang. Reminds us of how “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it” (John 1:5).

As we all begin a new year of uncertainty and expectations, may the Light of Jesus guide our way, and fill us with great joy and hope. Love from The Chans:

Gilbert, Winnie and Josiah