

December 2005

Dear Ones,

Last year, we celebrated Christmas with family and friends and visited Winnie's old San Francisco "haunts." We plan to be in the Bay Area again, this Christmas.



We thank God for another year of growth and "firsts." In late January, local friends watched Josiah and Andrew for 44 hours so Gilbert and Winnie could fly to Oakland for a welcome luncheon lunch (and wedding reception) for Gilbert's



Dad's wife, Mu Lan—what a fun getaway and time with family!

Other joys of 2005 include: news that Winnie's friend from China became a Christian and was baptized with her husband last December; one couple who was living together got married; two couples who were childless for many years conceived children (one baby is already born!); friends vacationing in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit made it safely out of the area later that week; two friends who got meningitis are still alive; we had our first yard sale and made over \$70, while Josiah netted \$14 from his lemonade stand; Winnie discovered the book, *Queen Cleans Everything*, by Linda Cobb; Josiah tried and was "pretty good" at rollerskating and building small model airplanes and warships; both boys rode a real horse and rode on the Tag Along behind Daddy's bike; now in 4th grade, Josiah wrote a good report on Stephen Hawking and began competing in chess tournaments; Andrew started kindergarten; and Gilbert was honored for 20 years working with Bechtel.



Touching our hearts this year were the deaths of Winnie's 93-year-old uncle in Guangzhou and a 40-year-old teacher's aide at Andrew's school; the starvation of Terri Schiavo; news of failed Christian marriages; and the considerable loss of life and property from Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake in Pakistan.

Along with spring came a friendly orange stray tabby that our cul-de-sac now considers its "neighborhood cat." We call him (or her?!) "TC" for Tailless Cat. Since most of our family is allergic to cat dander, we only pet and 'talk' to TC when outdoors.



Several neighborhood children gathered in our home for an Easter egg hunt and party. "Resurrection eggs" were used to tell the Easter story. We also delivered an "Easter pail" of goodies and a copy of Rick Warren's booklet, *Why On Earth Am I Here?* to each home on our street.



We had a surprise visitor at a dinner party at our house. A barn owl perched in our backyard arborvitae and captivated us all, glorifying God by simply being.

Summer was fun, with indoor treasure hunts, outdoor family swim nights, fairs/carnivals, and going to new places such as Baker City (Oregon) and Boise (Idaho). We recommend the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center; Tamatslikt Cultural Institute; Boise's Discovery Center of Idaho; World Center for Birds of Prey; and a "fun center" named Boondocks, where we tried laser tag for the first time—exciting!

In August, we headed north for our first family camping trip alone. Camped in Idaho and Canada (near Banff and Lake Louise). Took an overnight trip to Calgary and checked out the light rail system, Alberta Science Center, Police Interpretive Center, and Calgary Chinese Cultural Center.

On our last camp night, we made new friends at a neighboring campsite. They were having a family reunion and let us toast marshmallows over their campfire for s'mores. Afterwards, our family watched a meteor shower.



The next morning, Josiah celebrated his 9th birthday by canoeing for the first time.

In the fall, both boys

memorized Scripture and got progressively more skilled in soccer through a program called Upward Soccer. Andrew is still taking gymnastics and can be seen doing headstands and somersaults throughout the house.



Mom joined pirate Andrew and King Josiah in dressing up this October 31st.

We enjoyed some beautiful fall colors before the first snowfall on December 1.

Winnie scrambled to find someone to watch Andrew so she could report for jury duty, and the Lord graciously provided at the 9th hour through a Christian mother of four who volunteered to watch Andrew even though we had never met before but had a common friend; wonderful new friendships were born--God is great!

At this writing, Gilbert and Winnie are busy updating their master bathroom. And so, we send warmest greetings to you from our bathroom...uh, home to yours, with the love of Jesus whose birth we celebrate now. A joyous Christ+mas to you all!



Gilbert, Winnie, Josiah & Andrew

P.S. The Bible Bus will get to the book of Revelation late December (check www.tb.org for broadcasts).