

Great sadness and joy meet together each Christmas. The song, "O come, O come, Emmanuel" captures both themes. The dark backdrop of the world's evil contrasts with the glory of Christ's coming. Sadly nothing has changed in two thousand years.

Terrorist bombings are horrendous, but small compared to the plight of the persecuted. Can you imagine a radical group brutally killing and ill treating many as well as chasing all Christians out of a state like Massachusetts, burning their houses and churches while the government largely ignores it.

No justice. This is what happened this year in India. These 50,000 homeless Indian Christians are now held in 11 camps with death threats upon them if they return to their burnt-out homes. This is only one picture that has been etched on Paul's heart because of his ministry among these people. Real people, real pain. But because of Jesus, real joy.

This ugly injustice in our world serves to illuminate the Christmas miracle. God actually sent His Son Jesus Christ into such a desperate world as ours. How can people do such awful things? How can God reach out in love to such a people like you and me? Paul met one Christian who used to be a political hired hand who purposely stirred up trouble (e.g. setting off bombs) for other groups but is now saved by God's grace and is a pastor caring for others.

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Paul has been excited by the developing ministries of [Biblical Foundations for Freedom](#) (BFF). This year Paul made trips to Nigeria (Africa) and both sides of the Himalayan mountains in India. These times of serving national pastors are always unforgettable and yet so hard to describe. He is already praying and planning for similar trips to Africa, India and perhaps elsewhere for Christian leadership training seminars.



The other exciting aspect of the ministry is to see the full development of training materials that God has granted BFF. These many training materials help Christians grow at every stage in their lives. Paul is presently teaching a curriculum on intermediate discipleship. BFF has had a lot of material on how to grow in certain areas like overcoming anxiety, having a good marriage and renewing one's devotional life, but nothing with an overview of how all believers should be growing in their lives and the means to that growth. ([Click here to get biweekly ministry letters](#)).

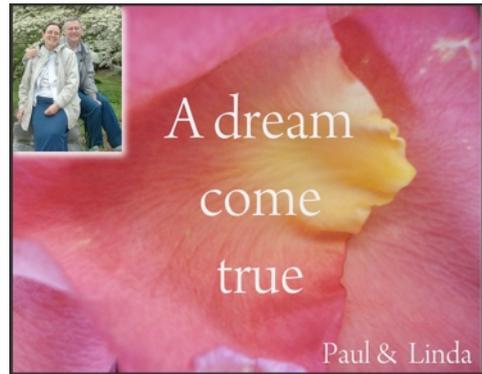


Linda's continual refining of her schedule enables her to do a bit more here or there. This includes watching her grandson, Joshua while Elias and Christy go out on their date. She is also coordinating more things at church with the Children's Ministry (CM) due to several team members temporarily stepping down to enlarge their families.

Homeschool continues to unfold its blessings and challenges with six active students. About once a month, Paul hears the comment, "I can't do this anymore." She is usually wrestling the student doing math. Too advanced. But she keeps on going on. Paul helps with the high school math.

Linda has surged forward in discovering and creating all sorts of health aids. More simpler ones include putting Vicks on the sole of a coughing person's feet at night to the more complicated of making kombucha, kefir, (good tasting smoothies with it) and a thyme-based cough syrup.

Paul and Linda celebrated their 30th anniversary by taking a trip by ourselves to beautiful and interesting Williamsburg. What a wonderful blessing a good marriage can be! Of course, this would have been nearly impossible without our children working together to make sure the routine went on for the week we were in Virginia.



Elizabeth continues working in a doctor's office and trying to adjust to the office being bought out by a larger healthcare provider. She just loves being an aunt (see picture with nephew on left), travels quite a bit and loves her new iMac. Whenever Paul is out of the office, she steals a little time to work on the church's website.



Christy and **Elias** are doing well. They have kept busy with traveling, church ministries and a cute 1 year old whose curiosity is never satisfied. They are looking forward to a more relaxed coming year with more focus on church ministry (leading a small group) now that Christy has stepped down from helping with the youth. Since they live nearby, everyone gets the opportunity a few times a week to play with and care for this charmer - **Joshua**.



Allison, 17, continues to write for role play (a group of friends that writes a serial story on the computer), drawing and even has started to play guitar for the youth group. This year she was able to take Chemistry and Spanish classes at high school (homeschool) and college getting both high credit. She just discovered that she earned an 'A' and 'B'! Next year she will be a senior in high school. Like her gerbil drawing?



Daniel, 15, loves church youth group, especially when going on a retreat or to the amusement park. He has joined Facebook. His big project this year was to take a photography class at a local craftsman school. He even matted several nice photos and put them on sale at the school's Open House. This year he focuses on helping and learning with Dad. He works repairing floors, plumbing, scraping and even painting a third floor awning. They just replaced our garage door-opener. Dad absolutely loves his help.



Benjamin, almost 14, invents his own wonderful cooking surprises. He is not afraid of anything (already far ahead of Dad here). He has also begun to learn how to split wood outside. Benjamin is the creative one and shows it in his interesting stories. The boys have designed a full life-size “band” complete with drums, guitars, etc. out of K’nex.



Isaac, already 9, has leapt ahead in reading. He keeps busy helping with all sorts of task around the house, playing with his brother

Benjamin and school. The children are learning Chinese this year.



This year we guys made a trip 1 mile high (short 10 feet) to the top of Mount Lincoln. It was a rigorous, nine mile, all day climb and descent. We were hurting at points. Just when we wanted to take a break a big storm broke and we could not easily rest. On we went. But we actually



made it (even Paul) –a mile high in the sky on Mount Lafayette’s bald head.



Kathryn, 12, is growing into a young lady with a beautiful smile. Last night, she reflected her Mom’s thoughtfulness by her placing a nice recently-made coconut macaroon on Dad’s desk (tasted wonderful). Kathryn loves to knit and has been doing some cooking.



Rebekah, 7, still loves to play dress up and play “Mommy”-caring for her dollies and “cooking” . This year she has helped Mom with the baking. She was delighted to learn to ride her bike and tie her shoes (finally). Computer time is a highlight for all the children including Rebekah.

*With Love from
The Bucknell Family!
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year*



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