



Merry Christmas!



It's Christmas again! And we again think of the Story of Christmas. Our card speaks of the flight into Egypt, which follows on the heels of the visit of the wise men. The Christmas Story is, as it were, a chapter in the greater Story of God's redemption of sinful man, the coming among us of Emmanuel, God with us. God became one of us so He could die as one of us – the only man with no sin, Who also having the infinite worth of God, could with that death pay what we could not, the ransom of our souls from eternal fire. That accomplished, the Resurrection, the "victory" chapter of that Story ensued, signifying that the payment was sufficient, acceptable. The Story is not over, but God's redemption is available to anyone today – THAT is the Christmas gift of all Christmas gifts! You can't buy it, you can't earn it, but you can have it FREE. Each of us may receive it simply by believing in Jesus the Messiah, His death, and His resurrection as something done on our behalf – taking God at His word. If you have not yet received this great gift, please do so. We want to see you in heaven!

Good News, right? You bet!

With you, we have also seen the more earthly news. As we saw last year, Israel has been under the gun, and remains so, though it has dealt serious blows to some enemies. But God is not through with Israel. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! In our nation, we have had the most remarkable of election seasons. Some are sad, some are joyful. There is some cause for both sentiments, no matter what outcome you hoped for. Pray for our nation, not least that we may come greatly to agree with God about what is right and what is wrong – which would make us much more agreed among ourselves. God loves us. We should love Him, and our neighbors, having a soft heart.

Much closer to home, Anne's brother, John Stickradt, passed into the presence of Jesus on October 11, after some years of increasing decline. We are sorry to lose him. Wife Susan, Carol, David, Julie, Heather, and their respective families remain. If anyone needs contact info, we can help with that.

We share some of our lesser matters. Yes, we remain in Texas, and after nearly 29 years, the born Texans still seem to tolerate us damyankees. And northward migration now seems unlikely, for a collection of reasons.

We do have a request of each of you. We think and hope we are using a good address for each card we send out – but we typically send somewhere around 200 to people to whom we are related or who have blessed us with their friendship and acquaintance over the years. Inevitably, we err with an address or two, and, also, people move on schedules that fall outside the Postal Service's support for forwarding and address correction. If you see we need help with your address or that of someone close to you, please just let us know. (The obvious request, and most desirable to us, "Please let us know if you didn't get this card," is, we see, most impracticable exactly where most needed. ☺ But if you've come to expect a card from us and next year don't get one by, say, the end of January, please so advise.) Otherwise, and at any time, we're happy to hear from y'all at your pleasure.

We mention, for those who don't know, that while we have a Facebook account, we don't post, and check it but infrequently. We invite you to visit our little family website (bottom of page 2). Who knows what Larry might post there? There might be something at least mildly amusing, or maybe even helpful in some way. →→→

Larry has now been "retired" for more than three years. He is still not quite sure what that means, except that the salary did not increase. He does know that whenever the trees shed their leaves, he shall be "allowed" to collect them. This date is a "movable feast", for Texas admits of 4 seasons: early summer, high summer, late summer, and not-summer (signified by the occasional freeze). At this writing, we remain in late summer, which often ends before Christmas. He thinks he will put up our modest outdoor decorations soon, leaves or no.

We report that, Anne having had cancer back in 2008, when she found a little "something" apparently growing "somewhere", we had some concern. She made reacquaintance with her oncologist from back when, and with some pictures (a PET scan found no pets at all) and some poking, we discovered that, whatever it is, cancer it is not. THAT was a relief! God was gracious!! Dr. Gupta will follow her for a bit just to be sure.

Well, as you may imagine, doctors and scans and all, one has to fill out yet more paperwork. Except it's not paper, it's on some "portal". After seeing several of these, we are convinced they are portals to some alternate universe, where the laws of physics, good grammar, and legal intelligibility do not apply. There is so much common sense as Alice found beyond the looking-glass, or Dorothy in Oz. Well, maybe not THAT much. One gives "consent" for, apparently, everyone to do everything, or nothing. And to charge for it. But Anne survived all that too. So far. She also valiantly prevailed against the annual onslaught of open enrollment, and we continue insured.

Anne has been promoted! After years as Head Domestic Administrator (HDA), diligently leading all Home Office functions, she has been elevated to the position of Home Secretary, also known as Chief Domestic Officer (CDO). This new position was recommended as vital by another family corporation (unnamed to preserve that entity's confidentiality), and the Chairman of the Board, with full concurrence of the Executive Committee, prevailed upon Anne to fill it. All agree she manifestly deserves the honor and dignity this signifies. She continues also to act as HDA; if you want to get something done here, she is whom to approach. Lest you think this new position is a mere honorary and empty title, nothing could be further from the truth! While we of course cannot publicly disclose Anne's compensation, we can reveal that, going forward, she will be paid TWICE what she was before. Truth be told, Anne has largely been carrying the burdens of both offices already, and we are glad to formalize her responsibilities and recognize her signal contributions.

Pursuant to her new position and attendant responsibilities as head of the Home Office, she has decreed that an annual "360 Review" is to be considered for all C-level officers. Larry is a bit pensive how this might affect his position as Chancellor/Foreign & Development Secretary (this consolidates his duties as head of Buildings & Grounds, head of Fleet Maintenance, and his responsibilities as Tax Administrator & Remitter and Custodian of Operating Expenditures). But he hopes these matters will resolve themselves while Anne and he meet together as the Executive Committee.

We're always happy to hear from y'all as you may find convenient. And we wish y'all a

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Our love,

Anne & Larry



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